Dudley
CHRONICLE

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TRADERS FACE CAR PARK CRISIS

Report by David Cosgrove

TRADERS have hit out at Dudley Council's multi-million pound revamp of Dudley town centre — saying it fails to tackle the town's parking crisis.

A £6 million 18-month overhaul of Market Place is nearing completion but businesses say what Dudley needs above all else to increase footfall at shops is more car parking spaces.

Adding more parking in the town centre would have been a better use of cash spent on the Market project, according to Roger Scott, a town trader of 20 years.

But Dudley's economy boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said the authority had already carried out a review of parking in Dudley and was also preparing plans for a new car park in Tower Street.

Mr Scott, a UKIP councillor but speaking as a business owner, said: "The improvements around the town have made some of the older buildings look presentable.

"But will this actually bring people back who used to shop here? I doubt it very much."

Mohammed Sagir, chairman of Voice of Dudley Business, echoed Mr Scott's concerns. He said: "The main way to improve Dudley town — and what the majority of businesses want — is improved car parking. They've made no progress on parking at all.

Elderly

"If customers have to sit in traffic or have to walk a long way into the centre, then they will just take their business somewhere else.

"Dudley used to be a busy town, where people used to love shopping but it's not any more."

Mr Scott added that for elderly shoppers in particular there was not enough parking close to the town centre.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We have recently reviewed the town centre's parking needs and increased the number of free on-street parking spaces to 835 with Dudley the only West Midlands council that does not have on-street pay and display.

"We have listened to town centre businesses and changed a number of free two-hour spaces to one-hour waiting, to increase the turnaround of shoppers in the town and to move longer stay visitors to available spaces in the town's pay and display car parks, where there is plenty of capacity."

He added: "We are preparing proposals for a new car park in the heart of the town centre at Tower Street.

"In addition the new car park which will accompany the foodstore development at the Cavendish House site will add further high quality car parking."

IT'S BACK TO THE TUDORS AT HADEN OLD HALL

Haden Old Hall's Tudor characters — in costume are Ken Waterhouse, Jean Drew, Ray Drew, Helen Holliday and Mark Aston

TUDOR times were brought back to life during a history day at Haden Old Hall.

Music and dancing helped to take people back to the 16th century at the house in Cradley Heath. The hall was originally built in the late 1600s but has parts dating back to the Tudor period, and is attached to Haden Hill House Museum.

On Sunday staff and volunteers welcomed scores of people to an open afternoon where costumed characters entertained the crowds.

Visitors were able to see beautiful birds of prey in the grounds and learn more about how they were used in Tudor times for hunting. Many of the birds which were common in Tudor times are now dwindling in numbers.

Museum services manager Jane Hanney, from Sandwell Museums Service, said: "The Old Hall isn't open to the public all the time, unlike the Victorian museum next door, so it is great on open days to see the house come alive with historic characters.

"The hall was probably built in the late 1600s but parts of it may date to the Tudor period.

"It has been heavily restored and the Friends of Haden Hill Estate have painted the inside with some fabulous historic colours such as red and yellow ochre.

"It has transformed the look of the building."

Haden Hill House Museum will host a craft afternoon on Sunday. The tearoom will be open for afternoon tea from 2pm until 4.30pm.

Staff continue the craft theme with a peg doll making workshop on August 23, costing £1.50, and the birds of prey will make a return to the site on August 30 from 2pm.

RESTORATION

Landmark cannon suddenly removed

THE cannon in front of Brierley Hill War Memorial has been removed without warning.

The ornamental cannon took pride of place on Church Hill and residents are demanding its return to its long-standing home.

Residents initially feared it had been stolen but it has actually been removed by Dudley Council, which is securing the site due to landslip concerns.

Environment boss Councillor Hilary Bills said the ornamental cannon will be returned in October after restoration work to the wall and bank is completed.

MONUMENT

Plans on show for war memorial move

CAMPAIGNERS hoping to find a new home for the war memorial in Woodsetton will be showcasing plans.

Residents and ward councillors have been working to re-locate the memorial from outside Mount Tabor Church in Sedgley Road. The church is no longer used and the monument too close to the road to allow services to take place.

Plans to move the memorial to Swan Village will be shown on Saturday from 8pm at High Arcal School. Contact Harry Brookes on 01902 674973.

COMMUNITY

Volunteers bringing new life to Civic Hall

THE number of bookings at Brierley Hill Civic Hall has soared since a community group took over the reins six month ago.

The venue has been used by theatre and dance groups and has also hosted fashion shows and weddings.

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) took over the day-to-day running of the building from Dudley Council in February.

Andy Gray, chief officer of CVS, said: "The first six months have been focussed on re-engaging with Brierley Hill people, councillors, traders and charities who like us all want their Civic Hall to flourish."

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MEET THE JAMBUSTERS

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HS2 will help London, not Midlands

Green Party's Natalie Bennett

THE £50 billion HS2 project will cluster resources at London and is the 'wrong answer' for the West Midlands, according to the leader of the Green Party.

Speaking to The Chronicle's sister newspaper, the Express & Star, Natalie Bennett said the scheme's huge bill would be better spent on local infrastructure in the Black Country.

Her damning assessment comes just weeks after the region's business leaders revealed a £3.3bn vision for the HS2 that would create 52,000 jobs.

Miss Bennett said: "Those behind the scheme seemed to have missed the fact local trains need to run from east to west, not just down to London. That is what would help build a stronger local economy.

"HS2 is the wrong answer for the West Midlands. It would be much more beneficial if the Government were to put the same amount of investment into local infrastructure, particularly in terms of encouraging people to walk and cycle, and into improving bus services."

A Midlands Growth Strategy developed by Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership seeks to secure Government funding for dozens of connected projects. These include extending the Midland Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill through Dudley town centre and introducing super-fast electric bus services linking HS2 stations to the i54 in Wolverhampton as well as Halesowen and Walsall.

But Miss Bennett is in no doubt which part of the country would benefit most from the high-speed rail line. She added: "Under the HS2 proposals 72 percent of journeys would be people travelling into London. All HS2 will achieve is an even greater focus of resources around the capital."

Taxpayers 'ripped off' by authority set-up

TAXPAYERS in the Black Country are being 'ripped off' by the set-up costs of the West Midlands Combined Authority, it has been claimed – as each borough pays the same as Birmingham.

West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge said the second city should pay more towards the £2.1 million cost instead of it being divided equally between seven councils.

But the UKIP MEP and Dudley councillor's comments have come under fire from the leader of Sandwell Council, Darren Cooper, who said the equal cost would ensure every area had an equal say.

Mr Etheridge, who represents Sedgley on Dudley Council, said the cost was being split equally between Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull — each authority budgeting £300,000.

He accused Dudley Council's Labour leadership of allowing the borough to be 'ripped off'. "Going on the results of the 2011 census, residents are having to pay more than three times the price per head as those in Birmingham," he said.

"Birmingham City Council should be paying the lion's share of the costs as they have a far greater budget.

Warning

"The poor old Dudley taxpayer is having a raw deal here. UKIP have been warning people about the pitfalls of entering into any kind of political union with Birmingham. It seems the Labour Council have fallen straight into the very first trap."

The census in 2011 put the population of Birmingham at 1,073,000, in Dudley it is 312,000.

But Councillor Cooper, who has led the Black Country's negotiations with other councils on the combined authority, which some have called a 'super council', said: "Mr Etheridge would be the first to complain if Birmingham had a greater say than each of the four Black Country boroughs.

"This is about us all being equals. If we want that equality between us, then we have to be fair to each other. If Birmingham put in more than us, there would be people in the city saying they should get the lion's share of the benefits as well."

Mayor and MP scale peak for charities

The triumphant Dudley climbers reach Bert's Peace Cairn on top of Ben Nevis, raising over £1,500

A GROUP of fundraisers, including Dudley North MP Ian Austin, have reached the summit of Ben Nevis in honour of a peace campaigner.

The walkers conquered the Britain's highest peak in memory of Bert Bissell and took the Black Country flag up with them.

The group including councillors Dave Tyler and Keiran Casey have raised hundreds of pounds for the Mayor of Dudley's charities, with Mayor Councillor Steve Waltho also on the expedition.

Mr Bissell, who died aged 96 in 1998, was a former probation officer who lived in Selborne Road, Dudley. He founded the Young Men's Bible Class at Vicar Street.

The campaigner and climber reached the summit of Ben Nevis on VJ Day in 1945 and returned many times, constructing a Peace Cairn on top of the Scottish mountain.

The group of climbers took a photograph at the cairn on Wednesday (August 5). After they reach the summit, Mr Austin tweeted: "Mission accomplished" but admitted the team were cold and drenched after difficult weather conditions.

Following in Mr Bissell's footsteps, they have raised more than £1,500 so far. This will be shared between Councillor Waltho's chosen charities — the Hope Centre in Halesowen, The What Centre in Stourbridge, More Mascots Please in Brierley Hill, Georgina Unit at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley and West Midlands Lupus UK.

North Priory transformed to flagship development

A MULTI-MILLION pound revamp of a former council estate has been completed and unveiled.

A total of 314 homes have been built at the transformed North Priory estate.

Housing firms Bromford and Keepmoat Homes and the Home and Communities Agency provided more than £12m of funding for the huge project.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, Dudley Council's cabinet member for housing, said: "Our vision for the new North Priory was for a flagship, landmark development that was ground breaking, sustainable, innovative and cutting edge in its design, appearance and construction.

"It was our vision to transform the area into a sustainable community with a range of house types, tenures and households contributing to the regeneration of the area.

Affordable

"I think that has been achieved and everyone involved should be congratulated."

The project provides a mix of affordable homes, including apartments, two, three and four-bedroom houses, bungalows for older people and four fully adapted wheelchair units.

Bromford's head of neighbourhoods Darrin Gamble said: "The inclusion of a community house means local organisations can bring their services to the doorstep of the local residents."

A tree was planted in a ceremony to mark the opening.

Drug crime is being targeted

DRUG pushers and users will be targeted in a new crackdown in Dudley.

Police have stepped-up patrols following reports of 'suspicious activity' in Oxford Street near Dudley Leisure Centre.

Uniformed and plain-clothes officers are making regular checks in the area following a number of complaints from residents.

A spokesman for the St James' neighbourhood police team said: "Reports have been received regarding vehicles being parked in locations around Oxford Street, Dudley, with the occupants possibly involved in drug-related activity.

"Officers will be targetting the location in both uniform and plain clothes to target any persons thought to be to be involved in illegal activity."

Games area plan at primary school

A MULTI-USE games area will be created at a Halesowen school under new proposals. Headteacher of Tenterfields Primary School, Rhian Welsh, has submitted a planning application to Dudley Council. A decision will be made within three months.

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Police cuts mean more crime, says trade boss

CRIME will increase in the Black Country if community police officers are taken off the streets, warns a business leader.

Up to 2,500 officers and civilian staff are set to lose their jobs in swingeing West Midlands Police cuts. The move is expected to hit community policing hardest, with 650 PCSOs set to go.

Halesowen Chamber of Trade fear the town could be in the firing line with reported crime lower than other areas.

But chairman Wayne Edwards believes the figures could be distorted due to traders being put off reporting crime.

He said: "You have to ring 101 for a non-emergency now and there can be a time delay. I rang 101 and didn't get a call back for three or four days.

"What is happening is traders are not reporting crime because they don't think it is worth it, they can't hold the suspect.

"It is going to deteriorate even more over the next few months, the presence of PCSOs is going to be lost."

Halesowen is currently covered by two shifts each made up of two officers and three PCSOs, but this is expected to a reduced.

Mr Edwards is set to meet with police chiefs to discuss his concerns that cuts in officer numbers will result in more crime.

"Crime is going to increase," he added. "We might not have the highest reported crime but people are not reporting it."

Optician to offer other health tips

PATIENTS at a Sedgley opticians will be offered more than just a new pair of glasses at future visits.

R T Knights, in Dudley Street, has been named Dudley borough's first Healthy Living Opticians and will offer help for patients including advice on health issues like smoking, alcohol and diet.

The scheme, a partnership between Dudley Council and Dudley Local Optical Committee, aims to help people lead a healthier lifestyle by offering advice to those who might not otherwise visit a health service.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "As opticians often see people who don't access any other health services, they are ideally placed."

School gets two new classrooms

TWO classrooms will be built at a Dudley primary school creating 105 new pupil places. Priory Primary, in Limes Road, has a current capacity of 525 pupils but the new development will mean this is increased to 630.

Man on legal high hit pregnant partner

A MAN who hit his pregnant partner and smashed a hole into a door at their Dudley home after taking a legal high has been jailed for 11 months.

Ricky Handy, aged 26, had also been drinking when the argument with his former girlfriend turned ugly.

Miss Elizabeth Power, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Handy admitted assault occasioning bodily harm and two offences of criminal damage.

He admitted assaulting Sarah Ralston on a basis that at the time 'he was drunk and took a legal high'.

"He did not intend to hurt her, but accepts his behaviour was reckless," Miss Power said. "They had been in a three-year relationship. At the time they had an 18-month-old child and his partner was pregnant. She rents her home from the defendant's mother and he would stay over approximately one night a week. She thought he was not behaving like himself and they had money issues."

She said that Handy, of Baptist End Road, Netherton, was verbally abusive, saying that he was 'sick of her' and that he wanted her to leave.

He went to a shop in Brierley Hill and spent £15 on a legal high and had alcohol. When he returned he threw a missile at his girlfriend's £3,000 TV set, breaking the screen. He picked up a plastic bag containing a metal pole which he threw at her, causing her eyebrow to bleed, and grabbed her by the throat.

Days later Miss Ralston was woken by the sound of something being smashed. It was a door panel. She called the police and Handy was arrested.

Mr Graham Russell, defending, said Handy had taken a legal high known as Lotus.

A friend, Wayne Neal, had described how he saw a recent change in Handy caused by him taking legal highs and drinking.

For assault Handy was jailed for 10 months, for damaging the TV two months concurrent, for smashing the door he was jailed for one month to run consecutively.

Judge John Warner said: "Your offending is aggravated by the fact that a child was present and you were in drink and had taken drugs."

New mosque site will be found by end of year

AN alternative site for a new mosque in Dudley will be found by the end of the year, as council bosses were advised to reject a £325,000 offer to drop court action.

Dudley Muslim Association (DMA) had tabled the out-of-court settlement to press ahead with its plans to build the mosque on land off Hall Street.

But now, in a fresh twist, the stand-off between Dudley Council and the DMA looks set to continue after council bosses were recommended to reject the offer for the land and resolve the dispute.

A final decision will be made on Monday and an action group, which will see the council work with the DMA will be set up in a bid to find an alternative site for the new building by the end of the year.

A report by a scrutiny panel, which assessed the £325,000 offer during a two-day hearing, does acknowledge the need to replace the existing mosque in Castle Hill, which is not fit for purpose, but says the site in Hall Street is not suitable for the development.

Meanwhile, a High Court hearing remains scheduled for October after the DMA previously appealed a decision which would allow the council to buy back the land.

Transparent

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "We welcome the report and the way that the historic two-day scrutiny meeting was handled. This open and transparent process enables us to take all of the recommendations the scrutiny board has outlined to our meeting of the cabinet to ensure we are able to take a fully informed decision."

Councillor Lowe said the panel had not considered the reaction of far-right groups that demonstrated over the issue when making the recommendation.

"I have no interest in the interests of the far right groups," he said. "Not for one second have I taken account of what the far right groups would want. We can't stop them coming but we can say they are not speaking on behalf of anyone in this council or this community — not now, not ever."

Amjid Raza, spokesman for DMA, said he was disappointed. He added: "The proposed 'action group' is yet another delay tactic by the council. The Court of Appeal hearing is scheduled to take place in October and we hope that justice will prevail."

Jayne's Wanderful car turns heads

Players Benik Afobe and Kortney Hause of Wolverhampton Wanderers with Jayne Barker and her Mini

WHAT'S gold and black and Wolves all over? Jayne Barker's customised Mini, that's what.

The car is adorned with Wolves colours, tributes, stickers and stripes and is a well-known sight around Molineux and the Black Country.

Jayne, aged 55 from Dudley, started her Wanderers obsession at the age of eight and it has grown to include her car and a massive collection of memorabilia.

"I first had a cream Mini but saw they'd released the orange colour and I knew straight away I had to get it," she said.

"I traded my car in for the new colour and for the last year or so I've spent around £500 decorating it, paying homage to the club I love. It's my pride and joy."

The car includes tributes to Sir Jack above the headlights, Wolf heads dotted along the bodywork and the word 'Wolverhampton' proudly emblazoned on the windscreen.

It has got the thumbs up from many of the players in the Wolves squad, as well as Wolves vice president Rachael Heyhoe Flint.

Baroness Heyhoe Flint said: "I kept seeing this wonderfully decorated Wolves coloured car every time I was at the ground and I just had to find out who owned it. After a few calls I got to meet Jayne — she's as lively as the car."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bostin' ball raises more than £2k

MORE than £2,000 has been raised for good causes as Miss Black Country hosted her charity ball.

Jade Secker hosted a bostin' variety show which mixed live music, comedy, prize auctions with food served up for guests on Friday night at The Village Hotel in Dudley.

Black Country band The Empty Can performed, alongside comedienne Marlene, The Black Country Wench.

In total £2,133.67 was raised to be donated to the pageant's charity Beauty With a Purpose which helps disadvantaged children.

Firm celebrates 30 years in business

A FAMILY-RUN office equipment firm has marked its 30th anniversary. Powell Office Style in Rowley Regis hosted an open day to celebrate with its customers, suppliers, business partners and friends.

Sophia Powell, managing director, said: "We employ local people who have all contributed to the continued success of the business."

In the past 30 years, Powell's has supplied more than £3million worth of furniture to for NHS offices, schools and colleges plus local businesses.

The Station Road firm employs 18.

Vandals targeting former depot site

VANDALS are trespassing on the site of a former distribution centre in Rowley Regis, spraying graffiti, drinking alcohol and setting fires.

Youths are hanging around the former Norbert Dentressangle depot in Doulton Road. The derelict site has been bought by Mar City Homes and police have been in discussions with the firm over securing it. Officers are conducting regular patrols.

Moe than 200 homes are to be built on the site after plans were approved.

Dark Ages theme for village's carnival day

A DARK Ages re-enactment group will be joining in the fun at a revived village carnival.

Dormston Carnival is being held on Saturday on the fields of Dormston School, in Sedgley.

Warriors will be demonstrating Dark Ages combat and also craft skills at the event off Mill Bank, from 11am to 5pm.

The Black Country Living Museum Transport Group will also be displaying vehicles made in the region.

Walk at beauty spot

A HEALTH walk is being held around a nature reserve at Sedgley.

The walk is being held on Saturday at Cotwall End Valley, between Sedgley and Lower Gornal. It starts at 2pm from the car park at Brockswood Animal Sanctuary in Catholic Lane, Sedgley, and finishes back there at 3.30pm.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

A WOMAN in Cambridge has proudly displayed her courgette which is seven feet long. Where is Frankie Howerd when you need him?

A FRIEND of a certain age was mortified to hear himself calling out his food order in the pub: "I'll have the ache and stale pie."

DODGY sums of our time. Research produced in support of Sunday shopping hours being extended suggests that, as stores become more profitable, the average household shopping bill could fall by £64 a year. Baloney, bunkum, balderdash.

REMEMBER the Olympic legacy? That was the theory that we Brits, fired by the example of the 2012 London Olympics, would take up running, jumping and organised sports and become a nation of sleek, snake-hipped athletes. As you may have noticed, it hasn't happened. This is probably because the real lesson of the Olympics was how much fun it is to slob out on the sofa for a fortnight with burgers and fizzy drinks, watching other people going purple in the quest for gold. The real beneficiaries of the 2012 Games were the sponsors, including the burger and cola firms. The new Sport Minister Tracey Crouch has announced a new consultation on the legacy, declaring: "Sport has such a positive impact on people's lives and I want to embed participation into this nation's DNA." Good luck with that but I fear the hamburgers are already embedded.

SO farewell, Cilla Black, gone far too early. Those of us of a certain age will remember her not as the motherly trouper of Blind Date but as the bewitching, fragile singer of the 1960s who could Step Inside Love and make your heart gasp. Part of that wonderful, exciting, hopeful, innocent world of a truly amazing decade is no more.

BACK in the Sixties it took us a while to tune in to the Liverpool accents of the Mersey Sound. I remember being puzzled by Cilla's line which went: "Where the curs of the days will be carried away by the smile on your face." Where were these curs being carried to?

SO, after the collapse of Kids Company, how many voluntary organisations will be available to take over some of its work? The answer may surprise you. Britain has about 60,000 children's charities. Should this make us feel terribly proud or deeply ashamed?

A READER says his local college is offering English for Speakers of Other Languages under the snappy acronym ESOL. He asks, what initials would they use if the language was Arabic?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Business leaders back super-council

BUSINESS leaders from three chambers of commerce have backed plans to create a combined authority for the West Midlands.

Chief executives of chambers in the Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire and Greater Birmingham said they were supporting the seven metropolitan council leaders in wanting to set up the West Midlands Combined Authority.

They endorsed it in a letter ahead of a conference in Birmingham where council leaders and business figures will discuss the authority, dubbed a 'super-council' by some, taking on powers over regeneration, skills and transport from the Government.

It takes place at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce offices in Edgbaston on Wednesday, August 19.

The chambers' letter, signed by Margaret Corneby from the Black Country, Louise Bennett for Coventry and Warwickshire and Paul Faulkner for Greater Birmingham, said the council leaders had provided 'a powerful basis for a successful combined authority'.

It added: "We would now like to add formally the weight of the three leading business support organisations in the area, representing the private enterprise that will be vital to the success of combined authority.

"We do believe that the chambers should be collectively built into the engagement process going forward. The recent growth in our respective areas was private-sector led and it is important that this continues."

"Businesses in our regions see this as a tremendous opportunity."

Landlords facing fines over illegal immigrants

by Daniel Wainwright

PRIVATE landlords in the Black Country are the first to face £3,000 fines if they do not keep strict controls on immigrants renting homes.

Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley, along with Birmingham, are part of a pilot scheme that sees landlords face the threat of legal action if they let a property to someone who has no right to be in Britain.

If they fail to conduct checks they already face fines of £1,000 per tenant and £80 per lodger, rising to £3,000 and £500 for repeated offences. The new scheme will also introduce a five-year prison term for persistent offenders.

There are warnings that the Government has not given landlords and letting agents enough information, as they plan to roll out measures to allow them to end tenancies for anyone who entered the country illegally or whose right to stay has expired.

Evaluation

It came as French police figures suggested as many as seven in 10 migrants in Calais may be reaching the UK.

The Home Office the pilot scheme in the Black Country was 'currently the subject of an evaluation which will be published in due course'.

Landlords say they fear they are being made to act as border guards.

Lyndon Whitehouse, of Wednesfield-based L&A Lettings, said: "It sounds as though we are meant to become like border guards and do the Government's job for it. We already have the embarrassment of having to check the immigration status of people who are obviously born and bred here."

Dudley North Labour MP Ian Austin added: "The Government is completely failing to get a grip. But if employers have to check the immigration status of their workers I don't see why landlords should not."

Manager raises locks of money

Kingswinford hospice shop manager Caroline Painter after her charity head shave

FROM pink locks to a grade one cut – a Compton Hospice shop manager had her head shaved to raise vital cash for the charity.

Mother-of-three Caroline Painter, who runs the store in Kingswinford, wanted to her bit to help a fund set up after the Wolverhampton-based hospice was raided by metal thieves.

Lead was stolen from the roof and around £20,000 worth of damage was caused to the charity's base at The Cedars during two separate raids in May. Catalytic converters were also taken from three charity vans.

Mrs Painter, aged 41, called in the help of barber Ned Simmons, who runs Ned's Barber Shop in Wolverhampton. He shaved off her short bob, leaving her with 3mm of hair all over, known as a grade one cut.

Mrs Painter, who lives in Wombourne and has worked for Compton Hospice for three years, says she is getting used to her new look.

Her efforts have so raised around £200 for the charity but has set a target of £300.

"The hospice has suffered because of the break-ins and the vans being vandalised so I wanted to do something to help the fundraising," said Mrs Painter.

"The hospice does a fantastic job of caring for people with life limiting illness and supporting their families."

Around £6,000 has been received in donations from residents and businesses since the devastating raids.

An offer of free CCTV from a security firm has also been taken up by the hospice, which costs £6 million a year to run.

Prison for harassment and threats to ex-partner

A MAN who threatened to kill his former lover has been locked up for 18 months after breaking a court order to keep away from her — just hours after it was made.

James Pearson and the woman had been together for 17 years when the relationship hit the rocks, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The order banning the 33-year-old from contacting her in any way or going within 100 metres of her home was served on him on March 2. Later the same day he shouted threats to kill the woman through her letter box later the same day before returning two hours later to shout more insults, said Mr Lee Egan, prosecuting.

The next afternoon Pearson went back again and she called the police. He was seen by officers and bailed pending further inquires but this did not stop the harassment.

On March 17 he went to his ex-partner's workplace and left a message warning that if she did not drop the case against him he would 'do her'.

"She was so frightened that she would not leave the house with her young son," added Mr Egan.

Pearson, of New Road, Netherton, who had previous convictions for drug and dishonesty offences, admitted three breaches of the order and intimidating a witness.

He now accepted the relationship was at an end, the court was told.

He was jailed by Judge Amjad Nawaz who told him: " Witness intimidation strikes at the core root of the criminal justice system."

Landmark sells out in five months

A NEW flats development in a former office block in Brierley Hill has sold out in five months.

The Landmark is being created by the redevelopment of the 140,000 sq ft site at The Waterfront.

It is scheduled for completion in December and is creating 181 homes, a mixture of one and two-bedroomed flats and penthouse apartments.

The Landmark is the former Point North building, originally the headquarters of banking operation Egg, and has been empty for six years.

Wolves legend Steve Bull is among those who have snapped up an apartment, which were on sale for between £89,950 and £149,950.

Birmingham-based Seven Capital haspledged to build 5,000 homes in the Midlands.

Family-run salon is celebrating success

A FAMILY-RUN beauty business has been voted salon of the year by a top skincare brand.

The Beauty Rooms, in High Street, Wall Heath, were awarded the Clarins Gold Award following five-star reviews for their treatments and staff.

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No opposition to mosque at empty former health centre

A FORMER health centre in Brierley Hill is being converted into a mosque.

The building in Albion Street is currently undergoing a complete refit, with new plans showing it has been taken over by the Jamia Mosque Rizvia, is based in nearby Trinity Street.

The group did not need to apply for planning permission to convert the site into a mosque as it is the same use class as the health centre under planning rules.

Dudley Council said neighbouring residents and businesses had been informed and that no objections had been received. The health centre had operated for more than 40 years.

The latest application concerns changes to the building, which has remained vacant since closing as a health centre. Planners said they did not believe the change to a mosque would have an adverse impact.

Plans to create a 'mega mosque' in Dudley have attracted widespread opposition with far-right groups protesting in the town.

An officer's report said: "As this is a relatively modern building the external alterations are considered to the appropriate in terms of scale and appearance. The new doors and additional glazing incorporate well within the fabric of the building."

Brierley Hill councillor Zafar Islam said "I have stressed very strongly that the people involved at Trinity Street Mosque talk to neighbours and they should invite neighbours in at the earliest opportunity."

Music to boost mayor's charities

SINGERS are tuning up for a musical fundraiser in aid of the Mayor of Dudley's chosen charities.

Six acts, including Elvis Presley and Michael Bublé tribute acts, will be performing at Parkes Hall Social Club in Dudley on August 27 from 8pm.

All the proceeds will go to Mayor Councillor Steve Waltho's chosen charities, which are The Hope Centre in Halesowen, The What Centre in Stourbridge, More Mascots Please at Brierley Hill, the Georgina Unit at Russells Hall Hospital, and the West Midlands branch of Lupus UK, based in Coseley.

Councillor Waltho said:"This is shaping up to be a fantastic night."

Tickets cost £2.50 from the club or Sue Randall on 07412 531924.

Yobs on Cider Avenue targeted

YOBS have been drinking, smoking and using foul language near homes in Quarry Bank, prompting extra police patrols.

Police say there have been complaints about groups in Cider Avenue.

Concern over French Bulldog puppies

Sought-after breed — a French Bulldog

PUPPIES illegally imported from Poland have been sold in the Black Country by 'unscrupulous' dealers.

The French Bulldog pups, which can sell for £2,000 each, may not have been properly vaccinated and officials are trying to find them.

The RSCPA has urged people to be vigilant, saying there is no guarantee about the health of dogs. Environmental health officers in Sandwell are now trying to trace up to 15 puppies that are believed to have been illegally imported. The council says the dogs were sold from an address in Tividale.

Anybody who has bought a puppy from the area, which was supplied with a pet passport from Poland, is advised to contact environmental health officials.

Puppies can only be imported legally once they are 15 weeks old, which gives time to have necessary vaccinations in their country of origin.

Passport

"They must also be microchipped and accompanied by a passport that matches the microchip.

Sandwell Council leader, Councillor Darren Cooper, said: "Unfortunately, falsified passports are being used by unscrupulous importers. If you are not confident that the puppy you are interested in buying matches the details in the passport, particularly if the puppy seems to be younger than the age given in the passport, then you should contact your vet or the council for further advice.

"If puppies have been imported for sale they may only be sold through a licensed pet shop, so imported puppies should never normally be sold from a private address."

Anyone who has bought such a puppy is asked to call 0121 569 6600.

Disabled man's legal bid over vote problem

A SEVERELY sight-impaired man says he is planning to take legal action against Dudley Council after claiming he was denied his right to a private vote at the General Election.

Graham Kirwan, of Brierley Hill, insists equipment provided at polling stations in the borough to aid people with sight problems is inadequate.

He was not able to cast his vote in May's election without assistance but refused help as he says this would have compromised his right to a vote.

He has not voted for nine years due to difficulties he has had with the equipment and his refusal to allow anyone else into the booth with him.

Polling stations in Dudley are fitted with magnifiers to help people with sight problems see their polling cards but Mr Kirwan insists he is unable to use them.

The 55-year-old suffers with Juvenile Macular Degeneration, a hereditary condition that has left him with only peripheral vision.

He said: "When you go into the polling station you can have the ballot paper altered into large print but the majority of visually-impaired people can't read it.

"My neighbour took me to the polling station and we asked the people at the place what I should do as I am visually impaired. They said the only solution was for my neighbour to come in and help me. But then it wouldn't be a secret vote. Somebody else could put an 'x' in the box.

Democratic

"The UK always tries to claim it is a democratic country but the majority are allowed to vote and some are not allowed to vote."

Mr Kirwan said he had contacted a solicitor over the issue and was attempting to take action against the council.

He claims the council is in breach of article 29 the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states disabled people must be able to 'vote by secret ballot in elections'.

He believes introducing online voting would make it easier for disabled people. "I want electronic voting," he said.

Phillip Tart, Dudley Council strategic director for resources and transformation, said: "Ballot papers are printed in the format as specified by the legislation. All polling stations are provided with magnifiers and selector templates to aid partially-sighted people to vote independently. Electors with disabilities can also be assisted by a companion or the presiding officer."

Graham Kirwan, from Brierley Hill, says he has been denied his right to vote in private due to disability

Concern over lack of lending for business

A SHARP contraction in business lending, revealed by new figures from the Bank of England, is a cause for concern say Black Country business leaders.

Johnathan Dudley, managing partner and head of manufacturing business at Crowe Clark Whitehill and chairman of the Alliance for the Black Country, said: "Clearly there is a growth in confidence in business and a willingness to do deals but after the problems of a few years ago there appears to be a reluctance of business to borrow from banks, who businesses perceive require too much in return.

"Although this gap has been partly filled by challenger lenders and alternative finance sources, the growing reluctance to engage with banks will continue to stifle investment and growth. Government schemes such as Funding for lending and Enterprise Finance Guarantee clearly haven't worked and they need overhauling and replacing. In addition, there needs to be a restoration of trust between the banks and businesses."

He said an increase in business lending was essential for delivering the aim to double the size of the Black Country economy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parents wanted to share experience

A BRIERLEY Hill children's charity is seeking volunteers.

Home-Start needs helpers to assist them support families in the community. The charity helps parents build better lives for their children.

Peter Dyson, trustee and volunteer, said: "We give volunteers excellent training to be able to support families with children under five in lots of ways. We may help with parenting tips, or by listening."

To help Home-Start contact the organisation on (01384) 482733. Training sessions start on September 23.

More mortgage applications made

THE Tipton and Coseley Building Society has reported a 10 per cent rise in mortgage applications during the first half of this year.

Between January and June, the society which also has branches in Sedgley and Bilston processed £38.29 million of mortgage applications. The amount was up from £33.72m for the same period last year.

Richard Newton, the Tipton's chief executive, said: "Interest rates remain at a historical low level and people are taking advantage of the competitive rates on offer."

Tea party to put venue in spotlight

A TWO-DAY Bostin' Tea Party event is being planned to showcase Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

The event on September 25 and 26 will feature entertainment, food and real ale.

Dudley Council transferred its day-to-day management of the venue to Dudley Council for Voluntary Service earlier this year to save money on running costs. Dudley CVS wants to increase the number of shows and events held each year.

Boot camp is fit for raising hospice money

A CHARITY keep-fit boot camp is being held to raise funds for Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge.

WLH Fitness is organising the event at Thorns Community College, Quarry Bank, next month.

The event, which is being held on Sunday, September 13, from 10am, is open to all ages and costs £5 to join in the fun. Call 07900 974956. The fitness group offers a range of keep-fit workouts including boxercise classes and boot camp sessions.

Swimming sessions

FAMILIES can make a splash at Stourbridge's Crystal Leisure Centre. Parent and toddler swimming sessions for youngsters four months to four years will run every Thursday in August. The half-hour sessions start at 2pm with a qualified instructor. £4 per child. Call (01384) 812800.

IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Charitable thoughts in light of collapse

HAVING seen her mug all over the place this week, it had been troubling me who Camila Batmanghelidjh really was.

My initial thought was she looked like a kind of radioactive Ena Sharples. But then it dawned on me. The woman who persuaded David Cameron to hand over £3 million of taxpayers' money the week before her organisation folded is not a charity worker, but is actually Black Country comedienne Lizzie Wiggins.

Camila Batmanghelidjh

The duchess, Lizzie Wiggins

The Prime Minister has been had over by the Duchess of Dudley.

■ ■ ■

THE serious question posed by the collapse of the Kids Company, which nobody seems to have been asking, is what constitutes a charity these days?

It used to be simple enough, somebody might rattle a tin in the high street, or maybe sell you a couple of raffle tickets, and the money went directly to the poor or the sick.

But these days we have charities that receive millions upon millions of pounds from the public purse, employing hundreds of people. The chief executive is paid £90,000 a year, and appears as a guest on Question Time. Few people outside the Westminster bubble really know what these organisations do, but we are assured by the trustees, who are drawn from the great and the good, that their work is vital.

Well I'm sorry, but that doesn't sound like a charity to me. That sounds suspiciously like a quango.

■ ■ ■

IN what sounded like a belated April Fool, Leicestershire Police admitted to only investigating attempted burglaries where the target is a house with an even number.

Of course, those responsible for the idea say it is all about resources and cutbacks.

Well here's another idea. Why don't they have a new policy of only issuing parking tickets to blue, white or green cars, and turn a blind eye to minor infringements by the drivers of red, grey or silver ones? Or why not ignore half of all speeding offences by, say, letting off drivers of saloon and estate cars?

And what would be the likelihood of any of that happening? Pretty close to zero. The powers that be are always very selective when it comes to police cutbacks.

■ ■ ■

NOT my joke, but I think it deserves a wider audience. A cricket commentator telephones the Australian dressing room, and asks to speak to Michael Clarke.

"He's just gone out to bat," replies the kit man, who picks up the phone.

"No worries," replies the journalist. "I'll hold."

Control room operator Steve Mason seen at work in Quinton

Emergency planning officer Frank Bird in the control room

Road team manager Felicity Joyce with a standard patrol vehicle

Meet the motorway team of jambusters

ROB COX meets the men and women who keep the West Midlands on the move 24/7

FROM a single nerve centre off the M5, a dedicated team of Highways England operators monitor more than 1,600 miles of road.

It is a 24/7 undertaking, supported by 140 roadside officers, with the sole purpose of keeping the Midlands' roads free of congestion.

Walking into the bustling control centre, located at Quinton Business Park, you could be forgiven for thinking you had accidentally entered mission control at NASA.

A huge television display spans the entire of the front wall while rows of operators, complete with headsets, attempt to assess the data it presents.

In the centre is a map of the Midlands' motorways stretching from Junction 16 of the M6 at Stoke down as far as Strensham Services off the M5, shortly before it meets the M50.

Footage

It also shows the main A-roads running west towards the Welsh border and spans as far east as Banbury in Oxfordshire.

In total the control centre monitors 800 miles of motorway, including the M6, M5 and M54, and 860 miles of A-road including the A5, A38 and A50.

Around the central map live footage is displayed from a selection of more than 700 cameras located across this busy network or roads.

To help the operators, of which there are 60 working across six shifts, the display offers other sources of information. On the left of the imposing screen are images from a 24-hour news service, Sky or BBC, which can be the first to alert Highways England to a crash.

Below that are wind speed readings which are particularly important for the Midlands' roads as the region has the highest concentration of elevated motorways in the UK.

Mission control — the hi-tech control room at Highways England at Quinton Business Park

Anything above 25mph can seriously affect high-sided vehicles. Anything above 20mph and 'High Wind – Slow Down' is automatically displayed on the gantries.

And to the far right of the screen is information on the region's two sections of 'smart motorway' which run along parts of the M6 and M42.

This technology uses variable speed limits displayed above the carriageway and allows drivers to use the hard shoulder during peak times.

Emergency planning officer Frank Bird explains: "The main way we achieve this is through a series of copper loops located under the motorway which detect changes in the speed of traffic.

"When the traffic slows down the technology in the road sends a message to the overhead gantries to state 'queue caution' or 'slow down' The next step then will be to check the nearest available camera on the network to see if we can see the incident.

"If, for example, a car has been flipped upside down over one of the loops, the technology can detect the car is not moving and sent us an automated signal. We would then kick into overdrive and start closing the motorway.

"We will quickly get a response car out there which can deal with matters like oil spills and start putting cones out."

In the case of a serious crash, where there is the need to close the motorway entirely, the focus of the control centre staff is on doing so as quickly as possible. The aim is to minimise the number of vehicles which are then stranded between where the accident took place and where the motorway has been closed.

Mr Bird, added: "On some occasions the nature of the incident allows us to let motorists slowly drive past in the correct direction. But if the incident is potentially a fatal one it is very unlikely we could do that as the scene will need to be preserved for the corner's investigations. In that case we need to turn the traffic around and send them back to the junction behind.

"As a general rule we work to the estimation a mile of traffic takes about an hour to release, so getting the motorway shut quickly in the first instance is crucial."

Smart motorways are perhaps the biggest tool at the control centre's disposal when it comes to reducing congestion. But how does slowing drivers down to 50mph speed up their journey?

"If you slow people down to 50mph it might feel sluggish, but there is an improvement in journey time reliability," said Mr Bird. "Otherwise at busy times people go at 70mph and have to brake very sharply and that is when you get a crash."

Ultimately all the work by Highways England, particularly that from its control centre, is an effort to keep drivers safe.

Listening to Mr Bird it is clear that staff at the control centre can get frustrated at the reasons some accidents take place in the first place.

With ever-increasing numbers of people having a smart mobile phone, there has been a big campaign to alert drivers to the dangers of using the devices while behind the wheel.

Selfies

Taking 'selfies' while driving has even been blamed for a peak in crashes on the UK's roads. There are other causes of accidents too.

Mr Bird said: "It is amazing how many times there is a crash on one side of the road and you see many cars on the other side skidding and breaking and then you hear a smash. It is the 'rubberneckers' who are busy watching what the emergency crews and ourselves are doing, not what is in front of them. Now we can put up big blue screens so drivers travelling in the other direction cannot see what has happened."

With more than 30 million cars licensed to be on the road in the UK, Highways England certainly have their work cut out to keep the traffic flowing.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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Call to save an old school building

AN application has been made to demolish another distinct historical building in Dudley to make way for housing.

The threat this time is to the Gilbert Claughton Building, Blowers Green Road. Built in 1904, primarily as a school, it has in later years been used as council administrative offices and training facilities.

This is a substantial, well-detailed, fine example of a school building of the period, contributing significantly to the appearance of the area. Aren't there enough wastelands/brownfield sites to build on? I can name several where development could only enhance the landscape instead of destroying another heritage asset.

Why not develop the site itself into homes which would make unique dwelling places instead of the box type properties we see increasingly on new housing estates.

Come on you Old Claughtonians, surely this building is worth saving. Make your objections known by e-mail to faisal.agha@dudley.gov.uk or write to Dudley MBC Planning Dept. Plans can be viewed online. The planning reference is P15/08

L WILLETTS
Dudley

Ring, ring, ring and ride

REGARDING reports on the declining use of Ring and Ride.

I have a 90-year-old neighbour who is almost blind and, due to a chest condition, is unable to use public transport. So she does not go out unless she is able to book Ring and Ride.

Since the change over in March it is terrible to get through to them.

She loves to go into Dudley on a Tuesday but rarely can as they say there are no journeys available.

Sometimes on a Friday when she pesters them, she can get to Merry Hill with very little shopping time.

She doesn't mind paying the £1 journey just to get out some days but sometimes when I go with her she is in such a distressed state because of Ring and Ride.

I have rung Head Office many a times and brought it up at the community meetings — surely it can be organised better for these people to get out.

R PLAISTER
Dudley

Sacred stage could play a key role

I BELIEVE that saving the Hippodrome is something many local people seriously care about. The Hippodrome should be a major link between the zoo and the Black Country Museum.

The stage at the Hippodrome is sacred, with entertainers like Laurel and Hardy along with many other famous people performing there in years gone by.

The Hippodrome could be sub-divided so as to keep the stage and maybe the first 20 rows of seats. This is what many theatres in American theme parks have done. The rest of the theatre could then be franchised off, cafe, heritage centre, etc.

'The Zoo – The Hippodrome — Black Country Museum — Canal Trips Experience' would complete a superb day out.

I believe that this package would be an excellent opportunity to extend tourism in Dudley. If we are to attract a greater volume of visitors to the area, I believe we would need to reach out.

We could all benefit from that couldn't we?

G OAKLEY
Stourbridge

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

We should look after our own people first

WHEN you hear the dreadful conditions that some of the immigrants are fleeing from you cannot help but feel for them. If you could go from poverty like they have lived in to what must seem like a life of luxury then you would probably do the same.

But we can only help so many and we have to make a stand. They have to come through the proper channels and have a job to come to.

Our benefit system is not a bottomless purse and no matter how hard it may be to turn away starving people with children and no homes, we have to put our own first.

Imagine you have a small income and a modest home and you are asked to feed and house a large group of people in your home. They will contribute nothing and you must do this at the expense of your family. You couldn't do it and you wouldn't do it.

What this country is on a much bigger scale but the same situation, we are putting looking after them before our own.

I have just read that an old people's home was closed recently because it needed money spent on it. Elderly people heartbroken because they did not want to move, local residents fought to keep it open to no avail. Now they are opening it up again to house immigrants. You couldn't make it up!

We have to close the purse and say no to anyone who does not have a job to come to — no benefits and no free housing.

J JAMES
Wordsley

A 'thank you' to firefighters

COULD we please, through your paper, say a big thank you to Stourbridge Fire Brigade?

I phoned to ask them if they could advise us about safety in the home. They came the very next day, even though they had just attended a fire.

The whole crew were prompt, pleasant and polite. We will be forever grateful to them.

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Speaker leaves a lot to think about

Ruth gives Lowe down on designer

Grange E TG

CHAIRMAN Hazel Smith presided over the meeting held at Grange Court, Stourbridge on July 7 and gave a very warm welcome to all members and visitors.

She also welcomed two visitors from West Midlands Federation, chairman Margaret Tew and secretary Hazel Butt.

Secretary Jean Williams reported that the annual quiz held at Stourbridge Football Club was a successful evening with prizes presented to Sedgley (E) guild who were the winners with 83 points and Kingswinford Guild who came second with 72 points. Jean was given a vote of thanks on behalf of members by Federation Chairman Margaret Tew for organising the event.

Chris Holton said that the copper collection and items for the food bank were still going well

Marlene O'Hanlon informed members about the ongoing collection for the shoe boxes. She will be collecting small toys for boys or girls at the meeting in September.

Speaker Ruth Lowe gave a very interesting talk about Mary Quant. She brought along a selection of items that Mary had designed, not just clothing but items of jewellery and make up. She held everyone's attention during her talk and the evening was enjoyed by all. A vote of thanks was given by the chairman on behalf of the members.

The next meeting will be held at Grange Court on September 1 when the Harvest supper will be served.

Fiona is named as most inspirational

Midland Chase Soroptimists

THE winner of the competition to find the Midland Chase Inspirational Woman 2015 has been announced.

A panel of five judges made the decision and the announcement was made at the Region AGM at the Chase Golf Club, Cannock.

Eleven clubs each nominated a woman who they felt fulfilled that title and, following presentations,Fiona Ford was named as the winner.

Fiona was nominated by SI Newcastle. Her own experience with hair loss following chemotherapy inspired her to set up a bespoke service for wig fitting in the Stoke area. She now has a salon called 'Fresh Hair' housed in the Royal Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent.

Midland Chase Region President Carol Bailey, a member of SI Wolverhampton, presented Fiona with a Royal Brierley crystal inscribed bowl and vouchers worth £150.

Fiona said how humbled and honoured she felt to have been nominated, especially when she met the other nominees – and said that she now felt overwhelmed and couldn't quite believe that she had been chosen for the title.

Fiona went on to commend Soroptimists for all the work they do to educate, empower and enable women and girls throughout the world.

For more information about SI Midland Chase visit the website www.sigbi.org/midland-chase

Quarry Bank E TWG

THERE were 24 members present at the July meeting of Quarry Bank TG. They were welcomed by Mrs Vera Raybould who was in the chair.

As always the meeting began with the reading and signing of last month's minutes, also the treasurer's report was given. Mrs Raybould gave information from her recent federation visit.

The art and crafts exhibition went very well – all in any way concerned were thanked.

A proposed art and craft group is to be held in the near future. An inaugural meeting will be held at Norton.

Social secretary Margaret Writtle gave information regarding a proposed visit to the National Memorial Arboretum. This hopefully, to be on September 22, but in order to go ahead there would need to be sufficient people interested to make the visit viable.

Speaker was Ann Welch who is head of clinic Action Heart, a most knowledgeable lady, who gave much to think about. On August 18, Pat Green will talk about 'Memories of Gran'.

Tea party in aid of Macmillan

Wollaston 'E' TWG

NO business took place at the July meeting as this took the form of a summer tea party to raise money for Macmillan nurses.

The committee had organised a delicious tea and 47 members sat down to enjoy it. Quite a few members apologised for non-attendance due to holidays, etc, so the total raised will be announced at the next meeting.

After the meal there was an extensive raffle and many members went home with prizes.

Proceedings concluded with a closely fought beetle drive.

The next meeting is on September 8 at 7.30pm at St James Church Hall, Wollaston. Speaker will be Ruth Lowe on the life and business of Mary Quant.

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New nursery places to be found after centre shuts

NURSERY children who lost out due to the closure of a Dudley community centre will be accommodated at three new developments, says the council boss.

Little Saints Nursery at St Thomas's Community Network in Kates Hill closed at the end of term with 52 children left needing new places.

Dudley Council Leader Pete Lowe said he is confident the children will get places at either a a new private day nursery or two other centres due to launch next year.

St Thomas's Community Network, set up 26 years ago to serve the people of Kates Hill, is due to close on September 30 because of funding cuts.

Councillor Lowe said: "We have, for a number of years, provided administrative and financial help to the charity, but with ever decreasing funding from central government, we are not in a position to meet the increasing pressures on the council budget.

"However, we will continue to provide help and support to the charity, including the staff and people using the services, as they wind down their work.

Sufficient

"As part of this, we are confident that there will be sufficient places for all children within the network's nursery, which closed earlier this month."

The new developments include the privately run Learning Journey Day Nursery which opened in July in Bromley, near Brierley Hill, providing 50 places.

A pre-school service provided in partnership with several schools at St John's Parish Hall in Kates Hill will offer 20 places from March.

An existing day care provider in the borough, which cannot yet be named, is to develop a new 50-place day nursery near Dudley town centre, due to open in January.

Bernard hangs up his boots

Bernard Ray is retiring from the building trade after 46 years but relatives have already found some DIY jobs for the 63-year-old at their homes

A DUDLEY man who has spent his entire working life in the building industry, during which time he has overseen the construction of hundreds of Black Country homes, is finally hanging up his boots.

Bernard Ray, aged 63, has retired as a site manager from regional developer Cameron Homes, where he spent the last decade of his career.

Starting on the jobs ladder as a 16-year-old apprentice with Wolverhampton Council in 1967, he completed his six years of training with the local authority as a carpenter and joiner before being recruited by another builder and then moving to Chasetown-based Cameron Homes,

He has worked his way up to the position of site manager, winning several awards along the way from the National House Building Council for his site management skills.

"My wife, son and daughter have lots of DIY jobs lined up for me," said Bernard, a lifelong Wolves fan.

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Once you've decided which course you want to study you will need to plan how you are going to pay for your studies. Don't worry there is lots of financial support available but in brief you can get a tuition fee loan which covers your tuition fees in full and a maintenance loan for your living costs like rent

You will start paying back your loans when you are earning £21,000 per year. So for example if you earn £25, 000 per year you would pay back £30 per month. The amount you pay back is determined by what you earn not what you owe.

Alternatively you can apply for a Higher Apprenticeship at Dudley College where you can study at an undergraduate level while earning. Areas you can join are: Business Administration, Accounts, Management, Engineering and Computing.

To find out more about undergraduate and higher apprenticeship courses at Dudley College contact Student Services on 01384 363 363.

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Water bargain at new floating market

Gardener Stuart Megson sells plants from his narrowboat at the recent Floating Markets event on the canal at Wednesfield

A FLOATING market is to be held on the canal in Brierley Hill this month. The event, which is run by the Roving Canal Traders' Association, is taking place on Dudley Canal near the Merry Hill shopping centre from August 21 to 23.

Traders who specialise in running their businesses from narrowboats will be taking part.

The market will run from 3pm to 10pm on the Friday and 10am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday. Traders on the canal sell a diverse range of products including painted canal ware, crafts, art, food and drink, jewellery, plants and souvenirs.

A similar event was a success recently at Wednesfield.

Meeting urged over pubs

MEETINGS are being sought with pub bosses and developers as a campaigner is trying to prevent the closure of more community pubs.

Bill Etheridge, West Midlands UKIP MEP, who is also a Sedgley councillor, said the campaign to save the Seven Stars pub in Sedgley had shown people were concerned about the loss of 'cherished locals'.

Mr Etheridge has written to Greg Clark, the Communities Secretary, calling for tighter regulations to help people protect pubs.

He said: "What started locally as a fight to hold on to the Seven Stars in Sedgley is fast becoming a national epidemic. We live in challenging times and the drinking habits of the nation has evolved too. There are many reasons why pubs fail and in such cases, a development into a retail unit often stops the loss of sometimes unique characteristic buildings.

"However, my constituents are concerned that there will be popular, family-orientated pubs included, which has been known to tear the heart out of communities."

Mr Etheridge has written to the chief executives of pub company Punch Taverns and property developer New River, which has been buying up pub land, calling for face to face meetings.

Apartments link name to the past

THE name of new Kinver retirement apartments will give a nod to the past as it recognises the garage which formally occupied the site.

Lowestone Court has been selected as the name for McCarthy and Stone's development in Stone Lane following a competition run by the building firm.

The name was proposed by local resident Wendy Cotterill and confirmed by South Staffordshire Council in recognition of Lowes Garage.

The development will feature 38 one and two-bedroom apartments for over 60s. It is expected to be completed later this year with the first residents due to move in at the start of 2016.

Gill Sabin, regional sales and marketing director, said: "It is important that all our developments have a name that is fitting to the local area. We are pleased that the name of our new development reflects the history of the area."

Number of dangerous dogs seized has doubled in region

THE number of dangerous dogs seized in the West Midlands has more than doubled.

There were 287 seizures in 2011/12, which rose to 604 between April 2014 and March of this year.

Last year's figure includes 189 animals seized on suspicion of being prohibited breeds under the Dangerous Dogs Act and 268 that were dangerously out of control.

An expert from West Midlands Police is now working with the Government to address the issue.

Pc Keith Evans said: "In most cases the fault lies not with the animal's temperament but with its owner: They may be mistreating it, allowing or even encouraging it to behave aggressively, or are simply naïve about how to best look after their dog and how it interacts with other animals and people.

"We appreciate the impact irresponsible dog ownership has on our communities. We have excellent equipment and trained officers to deal with dog-related incidents. All reports of dog-related incidents are taken seriously and I would encourage anyone to report concerns to us on the 101 number."

Pc Evans, who joined the force's dog unit in 2001 and has studied canine psychology, now advises the police on their national policy for dealing with fatal or serious dog attacks. He also works with the RSPCA and the British Horse Society.

He advises dog owners to embed an understanding of everyday objects, people and other dogs into their pets from an early age.

He said: "From the age of about eight to 14 weeks it is extremely important for pups to develop a good association with everyday objects, people and other dogs — it will stay with them for the rest of their lives."

Dog expert Pc Keith Evans

Site is putting business first

DUDLEY Business First has launched a new social media site designed to strike up conversation with the borough's firms and professionals.

It is Dudley Council's single point of contact to respond to business needs and inward investment enquiries for the borough and now this can be done through its LinkedIn page.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "Dudley borough's existing business base is diverse and impressive and we have major new investment opportunities."

To receive updates from Dudley Business First and start that conversation, follow them on LinkedIn at https://www.linkedin.com/company/dudley-business-first

Sculpture honours canal volunteers

Cradley Heath artist Luke Perry with his steel-made

A SCULPTURE honouring the volunteers who have worked for more than 50 years to preserve the canals of the Black Country will be installed next week.

Cradley Heath artist Luke Perry has created a piece celebrating those who have given up their time to care for Dudley's historic canal tunnel and limestone mines.

He is now putting the finishing touches to the artwork which has been commissioned by Dudley Canal Trust. It depicts a spade held in a pair of hands, is cast in steel and will go on display in one of the canal caverns under Dudley.

Written on the head of the spade are the words: "This monument is a celebration of the people who have kept this canal alive for over 50 years."

Bosses at the canal trust, off Birmingham New Road, said the efforts of volunteers over the years had turned the site into one of the busiest stretches of canal in the country with more than 80,000 visitors per year.

It will be installed at Hurst Junction. he sculpture will be placed on a plinth with natural light shining on to it from a well opening above.

New brewer alliance to launch at festival

A GROUP of West Midlands breweries are teaming up to stage a beer festival and launch a new alliance.

The event to unveil the Mercian Alliance of Brewers is being held at Green Duck Brewery in Stourbridge from September 4 to 6. Cask and keg beers from the six members will be featured. The group includes Green Duck; Fixed Wheel Brewery, Blackheath; Fownes Brewing Company, Upper Gornal; Twisted Barrel Brewery, Coventry; Two Towers Brewery, Birmingham and Glassjaw, Birmingham.

A beer made in collaboration between all the brewers is being created at Twisted Barrel Brewery for the festival.

The purpose of the alliance is to promote tnew craft beers being produced by small brewers in the region.

"We'd like to invite other brewers to join us. We'd like to be in a position of having increased buying power as a group," said Tom Fownes, of Fownes Brewing Company.

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Love at first sight on Coronation Day

Sixty happy years — David and Audrey Stevens, of Baptist End Road, Netherton celebrate their diamond anniversary

A DIAMOND couple from Netherton are celebrating 60 years together after they met whilst celebrating the Queen's coronation.

David and Audrey Stevens, from Baptist End Road, first met at school but it took a chance meeting a few years later to bring them back together.

Mrs Stevens, aged 78, said: "It was the Queen's coronation in 1953 and I went to the pub with some friends to celebrate and he was in there at the same time. We spoke but I didn't see him after but he always used to see my brother and ask where I was."

The pair started to go out, but David was in the forces. When he got demobbed in April 1954 they got engaged in the July. They married on July 30, 1955 at St John's Church, Kates Hill.

They have two children, David, 56 and Tracey, 50, and four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Mr Stevens, 81, was originally from Dixons Green whilst Mrs Stevens grew up in Kates Hill as the only girl out of nine brothers.

Mrs Stevens said it was their love at first sight that sustained the marriage.

She said: "When we met it was love at first sight for sure. We have had some brilliant times over the years and a very happy married life.

"Like every couple we have had our ups and downs and the odd disagreement but within a few hours it's all been forgotten. It's all about sharing and not being selfish."

They lived in Owen Street, Kates Hill, for 15 years before moving to Baptist End Road, where they have lived for 45 years.

They enjoy holidaying together and have a caravan in Stourport. Mrs Stevens added: "We had a huge party down our caravan, it was almost as good as our wedding day."

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Public urged to have a say on transport plan

PEOPLE are being urged to have to have their say on a transport plan for the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) has developed Movement for Growth, which sets out the region's proposed transport strategy for the next 20 years.

It includes strategic road and rail improvements, a fully integrated train, bus and rapid transit system and a comprehensive cycle network, all of which is underpinned by smart technology including ticketless travel and real time information.

Members of the public and business are now being invited to have their say on the plans during a 12-week public consultation and a series of public meetings.

Councillor Roger Lawrence, chair of the ITA, said: "We need a transport system that both builds upon our existing success stories but also helps our economy grow further and creates an even better place to live.

"Transport is vitally important to this and Movement for Growth sets out in detail the specific needs of the metropolitan area and how the system can help maximise our economic and social opportunities.

Opportunity

"This long-term plan is for the businesses and people of the West Midlands and I would encourage them to take this opportunity to help determine what the region's transport network will look like."

The plan outlines making better use of existing road and rail capacity to boost public transport including improvements to bottleneck junctions, the development of a new strategic cycle network and improved conditions for walking, all integrated with the latest smart technology. It also highlights ways to fund a long term programme of projects.

Meetings will be on September 9 at Wolverhampton Civic Centre; September 15 at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury; September 21, Dudley Council House. All at 6pm.

Home for cat in fire drama

Lisa Madeley, left, with Ann Evans from Paws and rescued Ruby the cat at Vets4Pet in Dudley Port after the feline survivor was found a new home

A CAT found in the charred remains of a burnt-out snooker club has been found a new home.

The fortunate feline, named Ruby by her new owners, was discovered in a 'bad way', inside Dudley Snooker and Pool Club after it was gutted by fire.

Ruby has been nursed back to health by Vets4Pets in Dudley Port over the past couple of months, with animal charity Paws paying for her treatment and finding a home.

Her new owner Jocelyn Newell, aged 57, spotted the moggie on a Facebook post. She and her family have three other cats – Daisy, George and Felix – and two dogs, Peggy and Poppy.

Ruby has now moved in with the family in their Coseley home.

Vets4Pets' head vet nurse Lisa Madeley said: "We were really pleased that Paws could help with this stray cat and happy she has found a forever home."

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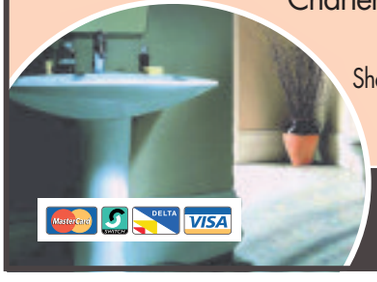

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Furniture shop charity anniversary

A TOWN centre homeware store has celebrated 10 years of raising funds for research into heart disease.

The Dudley Furniture & Electrical store in Castle Street, Dudley, is one of more than 700 shops in the UK from which all profits are handed to the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

It has been 10 years since it first opened and volunteers were invited to join the celebrations.

BHF area manager Julie Taylor said: "We've enjoyed a fantastic ten years of business. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal customers and volunteers who really make this store special and help the BHF fund its life-saving research."

The store offers a range of items including beds, sofas, and TVs, and will collect suitable unwanted items, call (01384) 505070.

College forge industry links

DUDLEY College invited a dozen engineering firms to inspect its facilities in a bid to form partnerships and establish apprenticeship opportunities for students.

Companies including United Steels and Plastic Bottle Supplies Ltd attended the event at Dudley Advance, the college's centre for advanced manufacturing and engineering technology. The event was organised by NatWest in a move to address the decline of skilled workers.

FOCUS ON DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

Almost 10,000 of town's artworks are hidden away

JUST 80 of more than 10,000 pieces of art owned by Dudley Council are on display.

Tens of thousands of pieces of fine art and glassware are in storage.

Less than one per cent of the 2,000 pieces of art and 8,000 pieces of glassware are on show with 50 items displayed in the Council House and 30 at a permanent gallery devoted to Percy Shakespeare.

This means 9,920 pieces of art – 99.2 per cent of the collection– are in stockrooms, according to figures obtained through a Freedom of Information request.

The council has been told it needs to cut £57 million from its budgets in the next three years with more than 130 jobs to be axed by the council in a bid to cut costs.

The council is looking to make 134 voluntary and two compulsory redundancies in 2015/16. That figure includes more than 30 youth workers who have been axed as part of a shake-up of council youth centres to save £200,000. Burial fees have also been increased.

Value

Bill Etheridge, UKIP MEP for the West Midlands and a Sedgley councillor, believes that the council should sell off the artworks that don't see the light of day and reinvest the money in services.

by Jack Averty

"There is no value to art if its not getting looked at," he said.

"Why has the council still got these pieces if they're just sat in storage for 11 and a half months a year collecting dust?

"If the art is of substantial value then it needs to be on display all year round for the public to see, if not the council should sell it off and reinvest the money in the Hippodrome or in other local services."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member responsible for tourism, said that the council makes an effort to change exhibitions regularly.

He said: "Clearly, it is not possible to display everything all at once, but we rotate pieces wherever possible and hold dedicated exhibitions throughout the year."

Apprentice ambassador for Dudley Lewis Sinclair with town ambassador Nikki Cheung

Apprentice ambassador role created

AN APPRENTICE ambassador for Dudley has been appointed as part of the £6.7 million transformation of the town centre.

Former Halesowen College student Lewis Sinclair has taken up the role. The 20-year-old will work alongside ambassador Nikki Cheung to promote the town.

It comes as work nears completion on the multi-million pound revamp of Dudley Market. Work has also begun on a £1.1m revamp of Coronation Gardens to include an amphitheatre, water in the fountain for the first time in decades, new seating, paths and lighting.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said:"The ambassador scheme continues to grow from strength to strength. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Lewis, and look forward to the positive outcomes that he and the town ambassador can bring. These are exciting times for Dudley."

Castle work to prevent path flood

FLOODING in Dudley Castle's courtyard should be a thing of the past after contractors carried out resurfacing work.

Dudley Zoo's gardeners called in workers to raise and resurface a section of the 11th century courtyard path.

The new raised smooth surface will allow rain to drain away naturally and prevent flooding in extreme downpours.

Gardener Anthony Gwilt said: "In the past, torrential rain has cut off a section of the courtyard creating a small lake.

"After Dudley Council carried out a site survey, we called in contractors who completed the work near the sealion pools in a week. The workers had to load a small digger to get through the narrow archway to the courtyard but they managed it and we are pleased with the results."

Rebellions and disorder

HISTORIAN Dr John Hunt is leading a day-long course on medieval Dudley.

The 'Rebellion, Law and Disorder' course, which costs £25, is being held on October 17 in Dudley Archives and Local History Centre in Tipton Road.

It will run from 10am to 4pm and includes the story of rebellions against three kings – John, Henry II and Henry III.

Places have to be reserved by September 30 on (01384) 812368 or 817798.

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No fixative, no surgery and the potential to fix denture stabilisation problems

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS (Eng) with dentist Dr Polly Mineva, and right, technicians working on suction technology dentures

DENTAL technician Steve Morris carefully crafts a denture, ensuring that a small aperture on the side of the prosthetic will be able to accommodate a tiny valve.

The denture looks like any other, but the clever diaphragm development to help hold it secure can give it the edge over its traditional counterparts.

"It's clever stuff," says Steve (GDC 142474), "a small diaphragm seals off a one-way valve under bite pressure, creating a vacuum between the denture and gums. The result is a better fit to the soft tissues and improved resistance to any dislodging forces created by eating and speaking."

Steak for dinner

For the right person, the Ultra Suction Solution can remedy common denture stability problems without surgery and messy fixatives.

"We recently manufactured a second prescription for a patient. We knew the fit was as perfect as it could possibly be, but I was amazed when they called the lab to tell us they'd been on their initial 'test run' with a steak for dinner.

"The patient was very happy with the outcome," adds Steve.

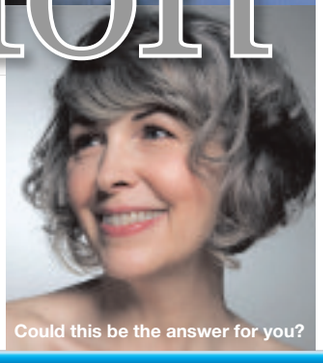
The Suction Solution option attracts the biggest number of inquiries at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

Principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, who heads the team at his multi-disciplined practice says: "We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this device is another useful option in our commitment to try to deliver results greater than patient expectations."

Suction solution

Historically, lower dentures can present stability problems as the jawbone erodes with age. With traditional dentures this can cause lower teeth to move and result in painful friction problems on gums.

The suction device can be mounted in upper or lower dentures and due to its efficiency the size of the acrylic 'plate' can sometimes be reduced, improving speech and taste.



Could this be the answer for you?

"I need to stress, however, the option is not suitable for all, but a single, free initial consultation would determine whether it could be the way forward. We never sell solutions here, but provide honest, comprehensive, clinical appraisals that help patients make informed choices," says Steven.

To achieve an harmonious fit, Denture Clinic prescriptions are 'set' using a Biofunctional Prosthetics System (BPS) which helps accurately replicate natural teeth anatomy during the production process.

"The fit is stunningly accurate," he adds.

Typically, denture patients will be assigned more than three-and-a-half hours of surgery time in achieving the best possible outcome.

Scanner

The Denture Clinic operates hand-in-glove with Steven's North Street Dental & Implant Clinic operation.

"Having everything under one roof – denture provision, general dentistry and dental implant provision – gives us a huge set of solutions and a deep pool of clinical skill from which we can draw.

"With a 3-D scanner, modern and air conditioned surgeries and a creative team, I believe we are strongly placed to tackle most problems," says Steven.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Portugal, Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, adds: "Implant dentistry is the ultimate, long-term solution for denture stability problems, but it is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference.

"The beauty of the suction technology is that it has the potential to deliver in the right patient excellent retainer qualities without the complex clinical procedures required for implant work."

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Denture Clinic

Samaritans in plea for cash as crucial service faces crisis

A CHARITY has issued a desperate plea for support with bosses fearing it could close if it does not receive a cash injection.

Brierley Hill Samaritans needs to raise £20,000 each year just to continue running and is currently having to rely on its reserves.

The charity offers an around-the-clock support line for people who often turn to them when at their lowest ebb. Bosses are now calling on businesses and residents to help ensure the vital service is not lost.

The branch in Albion Street takes more than 25,000 calls each year from people in crisis.

Branch chairman Graham Bristow said: "Each Samaritans branch in an independent charity and has to raise its own money to be able to function. We are currently looking at £20,000 a year to maintain our branch.

"It's something we have to raise. Our volunteers act as listeners but they are also having to be out there raising money.

"Some companies select a charity to support for 12 months and that would be an ideal scenario for us."

A significant outlay on upgrading computers has put a further strain on the budget. The upgrade was necessary as Samaritans now keeps in contact with many people through SMS messaging and email. Anyone interested in donating should email bhsgraham@icloud.com

Darts league hits £10k milestone

BILSTON and District Darts League celebrated a fundraising milestone after raising more than £10,000 for charity since its foundation.

The total passed the £10,000 mark this year after members raised £1,400 since January, donated to Macmillan Cancer Support. The group raised the cash by holding fundraisers, including a charity darts knock-out, raffle and weekly collections.

Chairman Lee Cox said: "Each week the teams have been collecting for our chosen charity, and it's amazing how much we have raised over the past few years."

For information on fundraising for Macmillan call 0300 1000200 or visit macmillan.org.uk/fundraising

Soul legends to play Robin

MOTOWN legends Martha Reeves and the Vandellas are set to play a Black Country show later this year.

The band, which formed in Detroit in the 1960s, will play The Robin 2 in Bilston on September 27.

They will perform their classic hits including Nowhere To Run, Heat Wave, Dancing In The Street and Jimmy Mack. Support comes from Britain's Got Talent soul star Rosie O'Sullivan.

Tickets costing £20 in advance or £22.50 on the door and are available from the box office on 01902 401211 or via therobin.co.uk website.

Tribute to family man motorcyclist, aged 52

Stewart Hollyoake — had fallen in love with motorbikes

'HE was loving and helpful – the type of bloke who would always be there for you if you were in trouble.'

These are the words of Wayne Shaw as he paid tribute to his brother-in-law Stewart Hollyoake, following his tragic death in a motorbike crash.

Biking fanatic Mr Hollyoake, 52, was killed last month in an accident in Shropshire.

Mr Shaw, 50, said engineer Mr Hollyoake had fallen in love with motorbikes late in life, having only gained his licence in his 40s.

But his love of being out on the road took over from all his other hobbies.

Mr Hollyoake died in an accident on the B4368 between Craven Arms and Bridgnorth on July 31 at 4.50pm.

Mr Shaw, of Tilston Drive, Brierley Hill, married to Mr Hollyoake's sister Joanne, said: "Stewart loved his family. He lived life how he wanted to live it and was a proud man. He looked after his mum.

"He was also a really funny guy, he had a wicked sense of humour."

Mr Hollyoake was raised on the Brickhouse Estate in Rowley Regis, where his mother, Sheila-Anne, still lives. His family home was in Netherton. He leaves his wife Dawn and son John.

Still time to enter strongman contest

ENTRIES are still being sought for a competition to find Sandwell's strongest man.

The event will be held at Sandwell Valley Country Park in West Bromwich on August 30 and 31 as part of the Sandwell Show.

Disciplines for 2015 include the giant dumb bell press, overhead log lift, giant tyre flip, and tractor pull.

Three training sessions will be held at Hadley Stadium in Smethwick over the next three Sundays from 9.45am to 11.45am.

Mike Childs, duty manager at Hadley Stadium Leisure Centre, said: "It's always a great spectacle and records seem to fall every year as the entrants get faster and stronger. Tens of thousands of enthusiastic spectators watched and cheered last year and that definitely charged the competitors and made them even more up for it."

It is £20 to enter and there are two weight categories.

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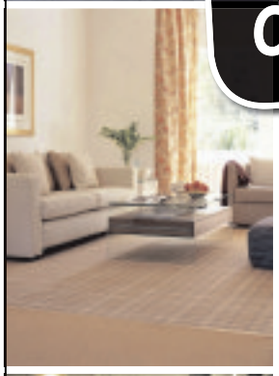

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Knife attacker locked up in secure hospital

A HOODED attacker who stabbed a shopkeeper 11 times has been locked up indefinitely in a secure hospital.

A court heard David Dean – diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic after a lifetime of drug abuse – presents a serious risk to the public.

The 43-year-old used a knife in a savage, unprovoked assault on Purshotam Lal, who was working alone in News and Booze, Bilston Road, Bilston, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Dean burst into the store at around 9.30pm on December 21.

The 51-year-old victim was repeatedly stabbed but bravely grabbed a stick while battling to fend off around 40 blows of the blade, the court heard.

The attacker finally fled, leaving Mr Lal suffering potentially lethal wounds and requiring surgery on his chest, knee and hand.

Dean was deemed unfit to plead to a charge of attempted murder because of the state of his mental health.

A jury took just 47 minutes to unanimously decide he was the attacker and found him guilty at an earlier hearing.

Dean, of Holloway Street, Monmore Green, appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court, where Judge John Wait ordered him to be detained indefinitely in secure accommodation under a Hospital Order.

Two psychiatrists reported Dean was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia triggered by an abuse of heroin, cocaine and other drugs, that had taken place from the age of 10.

He is under treatment at the Reaside Clinic, near Birmingham, and can only be freed in future on the orders of doctors and the Home Secretary.

Less than half an hour after the attack, Dean had been spotted starting a fire on waste ground. The remains of a scarf and gloves matching those worn by the knifeman were found at the scene. He denied involvement during a police interview and claimed to have lost the gloves and scarf.

Interserve plans new HQ

An artist's impression of the new Interserve offices to be built near Birmingham Airport for 1,200 of its staff in the West Midlands

HUNDREDS of workers in the Black Country will be moved to a multi-million pound HQ to be built near Birmingham Airport.

Construction and services group Interserve aims to bring together staff from its sites across the West Midlands at the offices from early 2018. Around 1,200 people will move from offices at West Bromwich, Dudley, Erdington, Redditch and the company's RMD Kwikform business at Aldridge. No one is expected to lose their job.

The Berkshire-based group, which built the Jaguar Land Rover engine factory in Wolverhampton and is working on the £13.5m business school for the University of Wolverhampton, has its construction base in Birmingham and nearly 400 support services and engineering staff at the Intersection House office block in West Bromwich, as well as the 120 at RMD Kwikform's two sites in Aldridge.

After its £250 million takeover of office cleaners Initial Services last year, Interserve also has around 100 Initial Services staff working at Castlegate Park in Dudley who will also be part of the move. It will not affect the 600 staff who work for Interserve at Russells Hall Hospital.

Budget chain Aldi plans to open more stores

BUDGET supermarket Aldi has unveiled a £600 million expansion which includes hiring 8,000 more staff and opening hundreds of new stores — including one in Lye.

The supermarket is aiming to increase its UK workforce to 35,000, as well as open 130 new stores in the two-year planned investment.

Aldi has boomed in recent years and in April overtook Waitrose as the UK's sixth-biggest supermarket, with a 5.3 per cent slice of the market.

It already has a string of stores across the Black Country and has plans laid for a new store in Oldbury to open in October and a second store in Stafford in November.

It has also secured planning permission for a new store on a former industrial site in Lye, another on the old British Sugar site at Kidderminster and one on the site of the derelict King Arthur pub on Birmingham New Road in Dudley.

The stores usually create 40 full jobs per supermarket.

New Street cabbies in boycott threat over pick-up fees

BLACK cab drivers in Birmingham are threatening to boycott New Street Station after being told they will have to pay extra fees of up to £1,000 per year to pick up passengers.

There were fears that thousands of commuters could be left stranded.

The taxi driver's union, RMT, is meeting with Network Rail bosses over the charges, which the union say could see drivers forced out of business.

RMT added that drivers already pay a 20p fee to the station every time they pick up a passenger there. It also stated that drivers had show great patience in working around the construction site for the last five years.

But Network Rail says the new fees, which are being introduced when the station fully opens on September 20, are part of a policy to improve air quality by issuing higher charges for the more polluting cars.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash, said: "None of our taxi driver members will accept Network Rail's terms. They are all united and determined that no-one will pay this extortionate fee.

"Instead, drivers will be forced to ply for hire near the station, meaning that Network Rail's actions will simply inconvenience passengers by making them walk further to pick up a taxi.

Congestion

"This will have serious consequences and create severe congestion throughout the surrounding area.

"Bearing in mind that £750 million has been spent refurbishing New Street station to benefit passengers, it is appalling that one of the results will be to disrupt and inconvenience passengers with onward travel needs as taxi drivers are unfairly penalised."

Network Rail said the new charge is designed to discourage older and more polluting vehicles.

A spokeswoman added: "The charge is on a sliding scale, similar to the road tax, starting at around £400 per year. The £1,000 is at the higher end of the scale.

"This is designed to ensure better air quality and a better customer experience."

The disruption could start during September as an unprecedented number of major events are being held in the city centre.

Wise move for the owls

An Ethiopian Eagle Owl cared for by the World Owl Trust, on way to Himley

THIS beautiful owl is one of more than 200 who have arrived in Staffordshire on a two-year pit-stop before a move to Dudley.

The World Owl Trust has set up a sanctuary for the birds at South Staffordshire College's Rodbaston campus, near Penkridge, following a stay in the Lake District.

The birds will remain at the campus for the next two years – and then move to a new £750,000 sanctuary being built at Himley Hall.

John Buchan, of South Staffordshire College, said he thought someone was pulling his leg when he received the request from the conservation charity to look after the 200 birds.

It is anticipated that about 20 of them will remain at the college campus, forming a separate breeding site.

"I thought it was a joke," he said. "For me and my staff, it's such exciting times. To be involved with an organisation like the World Owl Trust is amazing."

The trust said it hoped the owl sanctuary at Himley Hall would open in Easter 2017.

There are plans to set up 60 aviaries, a tea room, a shop for visitors and an education centre.

Community is praised for its floral efforts

A COUNCILLOR has praised the community in Amblecote following an impressive display of flowers for its first In Bloom competition entry.

Gardens and shop fronts in Amblecote were transformed with baskets, borders and pots for the arrival of the Heart of England judges.

The project was the brainchild of Councillor Christine Perks who formed a Friends of Amblecote team to take the initiative forward.

Councillor Perks was overwhelmed by the backing of the village to get behind their first attempt.

She said: "The day went really well. The village was absolutely transformed.

"The participation by shop keepers was great.

"Many had huge flower pots outside and vases of flowers in the windows.

"We hope to get a good report from the judges but regardless we have set out what we wanted to do by bringing the community together and making it look very special."

For more information or to get involved with next years project contact Councillor Perks at cllr.christine.perks@dudleymbc.org.uk.

Map of graves now available for churchyard

VISITORS to a churchyard in the Black Country will now find it much easier to locate the graves of ancestors and war heroes after church leaders secured a detailed map of the grounds.

The large-scale map has arrived at St Peter's Church in Cradley and contains details of where graves are and guides people along the church's heritage trail.

It has been created by Midland Film and Art after a bid for £10,000 of lottery funding was successful.

It is being stored in the church and is now available for visitors to view.

More than 40 war heroes are buried at the church. Visitors regularly attend the churchyard to find out more about their history.

The churchyards contains 12 war graves as well as around 30 more of people who served with the military. There are around 10 more deemed to be of local interest, including former headteachers and people who held other prominent positions in the area.

Vicar at St Peter's Reverend Katryn Leclezio said: "It is a highly detailed map, featuring the different sections and individual plots and it takes you to the exact location of the grave."

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Gardening is good for your health

Donald and Barbara Hall in their blooming lovely garden in Netherton, which has helped Mr Hall fight illness

A PENSIONER has won awards for his beautiful garden but more importantly Donald Hall believes it is has also helped his battle with cancer.

Mr Hall has twice been diagnosed with cancer and also had a serious heart operation but feels caring for his flowers and lawn is therapeutic.

He explained that working outside in the garden of his Netherton home with his wife Barbara every day was a joy. The couple's garden at their home in Abingdon Road is packed with beautiful blooms, from marigolds to begonias.

Barbara, aged 74, is a retired florist, and the couple both spend hours in the garden and have done so since Mr Hall's first cancer diagnosis in 2005.

He battled to beat tongue cancer but was then dealt another blow with a prostate cancer diagnosis.

Mr Hall, 77, said: "Gardening is good for my health. The gardening I do isn't heavy stuff like digging or setting vegetables, it's just a matter of keeping the lawn and flowers looking nice.

"I'm out there every day and so is my wife. If you're in the garden it takes things off your mind, but if you sit in the house doing nothing or watching television things come up and you worry about them. Cancer can be mentioned on the TV and that gets on your mind."

Support

Mr Hall also thanked his wife for her unwavering support and said: "If I hadn't met Barbara I don't think I would be here today."

Former car components inspector Mr Hall met Barbara around a decade ago at Wood Farm Golf and Country club in Essington.

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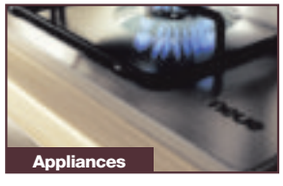

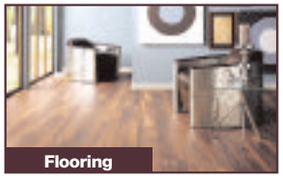

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Thousands of pupils attending schools that contain asbestos

THOUSANDS of children in the Black Country are attending schools that still have asbestos in their structures.

Some 86 per cent of schools still contain the substance, which can cause health problems if disturbed. A total of 101 of Dudley's 107 schools have asbestos. The figure is 69 out of 76 schools in Wolverhampton and 216 of Worcestershire's 243.

The number of schools is not available for Sandwell but figures show that 46,880 pupils in Sandwell attend schools were asbestos is present.

There overall figure is 344,886 pupils in the Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire attending schools where there is asbestos.

Asbestos was banned as a building material in 1999 but there is no legal requirement to remove it – and councils insist children are not at risk.

If a person is exposed to asbestos dust during building work it can lead to serious health problems including mesothelioma.

Funding

Campaigners say the Government should provide funding for schools to get rid of asbestos.

Councillor Ian Cooper, Dudley's children's services chief, said: "Any major programme of complete asbestos removal in our schools would be extremely costly as well as being disruptive to teaching and learning.

"Whilst we understand people's concerns about asbestos, particularly in schools, we would reassure them that we have a robust management programme for regulation and control. It is deemed to be safe if it is in an undamaged condition.

"There is also a strict policy which is followed when any building work is carried out at schools. An asbestos survey is carried out before any work is undertaken to ensure the safety of children and staff."

Pub is facing demolition in homes plan

A FORMER pub in Sedgley is set to be demolished under new plans which would see 10 homes being built in its place.

The Leopard Inn, in Dudley Road, will be bulldozed if the plans get the backing of councillors.

New properties will be built on the site of the pub and its 46-space car park.

Seven three-bedroom homes, a pair of two-bedroom homes and a one-bedroom flat would be constructed under the plans submitted by Renewable Consultancy.

The Leopard is the latest Sedgley pub to be targeted by developers with supermarket giant Morrison's already getting permission to take over the Seven Stars in Gospel End Road.

Renewable Consultancy said the homes at the old Leopard would make use of previously developed land and help improve the fortunes of nearby shops.

Last concert for iconic music venue

Food rather than music will be the emphasis at The Kingfisher with a revamp planned for the restaurant

ICONIC Dudley music venue The Kingfisher, which has hosted live entertainment for almost 50 years, has staged its final gig.

The club at Wall Heath has hosted many famous names over the years from the music and comedy scenes, including in the 1960s Jimi Hendrix and even an early line-up of The Beatles. As a cabaret venue it attracted Bob Monkhouse, Frank Carson and Bernard Manning.

But a lack of customers in recent years has forced the current owners to sell the Kidderminster Road bar, club and restaurant. The country club, hotel and gym at the site are not affected by the sale.

The venue bowed out with a 1980s-themed party when Born In The Eighties took to the stage. Ten staff have been made redundant.

Director David Facer, who took over the running of the venue in May 2013, said it had been a difficult decision to put it on the market.

He said: "The first year we had very good trading. We then suffered a downturn in trading during the summer of 2014, with a rush of other clubs opening in Stourbridge and Wolverhampton.

"Now the brewery has called-in a loan early and we are struggling financially. We needed this place to be busy three times a week to break even but we could never get more than two. We have been trying to sell the place since October and luckily we have found a buyer."

The new owners will turn the club into a bigger restaurant.

More than 100 arrests made for grooming

MORE than 100 arrests have been made by West Midlands Police in the last five years in connection with online child grooming.

A total of 112 arrests have been made between January 1, 2010, and December 31 2014, after police dealt with 58 suspected incidents.

These figures refer to cases where an adult over the age of 18 are accused of meeting with a child under the age of 16 after allegedly grooming online.

According to a Freedom of Information request, 18 of the 58 accusations dealt with by West Midlands Police resulted in a charge The highest number of arrests came in 2012 with 28.

Detective Superintendent Tim Bacon, from West Midland Police's Public Protection Unit, said: "The figures relate to a very specific offence: actually meeting children under 16 following grooming where the offender is over 18-years-old. Instances of these crimes are very rare.

"The numbers should not be taken as an indication of the force's overall approach to tackling child abuse. If used in isolation they will give a much distorted and wholly inaccurate view of the issue as a whole. West Midlands Police have a very proactive approach to targeting online abusers and investigate crimes thoroughly. Our focus is always the victim and their wellbeing."

Top Gun movie night at Merry Hill drive-in

A DRIVE-IN movie night is being held at intu Merry Hill.

The 1986 film Top Gun, starring Tom Cruise, is being shown on the main car park at the shopping complex on Friday, August 21, at 9.30pm.

Tickets are being sold in advance from the customer service desk at the shopping centre with proceeds going to local charity Promise Dreams. Gates will open at 7pm and the sound will be available via car radios.

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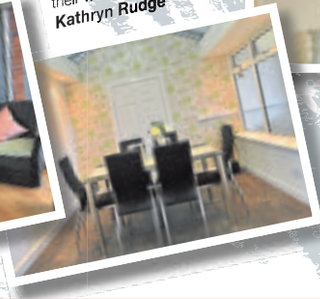

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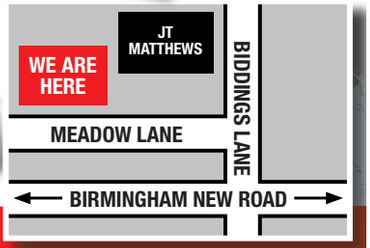

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Alloy Wire sets sights on £10m sales

The Alloy Wire team celebrate achieving quality accreditations at the Brierley Hill factory of the staff-owned business

A BRIERLEY Hill manufacturer – 100 per cent owned by its staff – has invested more than £700,000 in a bid to increase its global business.

Alloy Wire, which makes round, flat, shaped profile and electrical resistance wires in a range of nickel alloys, has set its sights on reaching £10 million of annual sales by 2016.

It has boosted its capacity across two sites, in the West Midlands and in Yorkshire.

The company recently put the finishing touches on an investment drive that has seen it install three Zwick tensile and hardness testing machines, PMI material x-ray guns, fully automated multi spindle spooling machine, a five metre strand annealing furnace and a bespoke wire finishing line.

It has given the firm the ability to double its capacity, improve accuracy and extend its capability to produce wire from 0.025mm to 21mm.

Success

"We've had a really good time since the global recession, boosting turnover from £4.5m in 2009 to its current £8m level," explained Mark Venables, managing director, who led the management buy-out two years ago.

"Our success has been down to our ability to take on small batch quantities, fast response times and the fact we can manufacture in more than 60 different alloys. Now is the right time to build on that success and the significant investment we have made in extending the factory and equipping it with automation and state-of-the-art technology will help us offer an even better product and level of service."

He added: "It's not just capital we are spending money on.

"All our 25 staff receive ongoing training and are encouraged to learn new skills that can add value to the business."

Established in 1946, Alloy Wire is a leading manufacturer of precision drawn round wire, flat wire and shaped wire in a range of high performance and exotic nickel alloys.

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A typical snowy scene in Hollies Drive, Wednesbury during the winter of 1978

Wolverhampton, from The Rock in Tettenhall, in the 1980s

Mr Turner's favourite image, Ocker Hill, with the now-demolished power station visible

Bustling shoppers seen at Wednesbury town centre

Sid Turner, with a picture of two girls in the Walsall Festival in 1975, which is being exhibited in Bilston

Black Country past brought to life with Sid's pictures at an exhibition

MEMORY LANE

By Adam Burling

CLUTCHING a second-hand camera and a small bag of belongings, Sid Turner left behind his home city of Liverpool in 1974 to start a new life in the Black Country.

He had signed up to train as a teacher at the old West Midlands College in Walsall – and quickly became fascinated by the area's industrial landscape and heritage.

Mr Turner went on to teach in a string of local schools, and spent his spare time taking photos of all aspects of Black Country life. Now he has collected the images and is displaying them across the region.

His exhibition, 'Ghosts' at Bilston Craft Gallery, has attracted hundreds of people and has been particularly popular among the older generations who recognised landmarks that have long since been demolished.

The 53-year-old was inspired to display the highlights from his collection of thousands of photos after realising how much the area had changed in recent years. And though he accepts there have been some positive developments, he feels the overall impact of changes in the Black Country has been negative.

Man and boy – a stunning shot of Walsall Market in the mid 1970s

Sid Turner as a student in the mid-1970s, when he always had his camera with him

And he was struck by just how nostalgic people have been when they see his images.

He said: "When we look at old photographs, parents, friends, lovers look back at us, frozen forever in time. It has been quite an emotional experience for a lot of people."

Mr Turner moved to the Black Country when he started dating a woman from Chuckery in Walsall while he was a member of Liverpool Diving Club. And, apart from the odd spell abroad, he has stayed in the area ever since and now lives in Wednesbury.

Though photography has been one of his main interests, he has also turned his hand to stone masonry, silver work, ceramic art and even clock-making.

After being made redundant from his job as a stonemason, he turned to teaching.

As he had qualifications in both art and design, and chemistry and physics, Mr Turner ended up teaching science at schools including Darlaston and Willenhall comprehensives and Manor Farm.

But throughout his career he has never stopped taking photos of urban scenes. He now works as a surveyor for Birmingham City Council and at one point tried to survive as a professional artist.

Mr Turner is still taking photos every day in between his day job and a project he is running at Birmingham University looking at how metal can be extracted from scrap computers.

His ceramic work has been exhibited in galleries in France and Prague, as well as the Wedgwood gallery in Stoke.

In 2002 he lived in China for a year, where a friend had already set up a new life, and started a clock-making business.

But within a year he had returned to the Black Country, where he says his heart lies. Mr Turner's love of photography started when, as a five-year-old, he used his father's old Brownie box camera to capture images of birds in the garden.

He joined Liverpool Photography Society during his teens but always focused on rural landscapes.

He said: "I wish I had taken some more of Liverpool in the 1960s and Beatlemania as they might have been worth a few bob now, but I was trying to do more artistic shots."

When he arrived in the Black Country, though, he noticed how the towns and communities were defined by factories and steel plants.

star extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks

Choose your show, price band and how you want to travel*

Rail inclusive breaks – Two or three days
Departures most weekends

Saturday Night Theatre from £159.95
Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

Theatre Showstopper from £229.95
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Selected weekend departures

Saturday Night from £139.95
Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £149.95
Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing.

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel plus full English breakfast.

Pick-up points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.*

Organised by Omega Events Ltd (ABTA Y590X)

For a theatre brochure please call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Charity marks move with Mary's award

Home-Start Dudley Chairwoman Mary Turner with her service award and colleagues outside the charity's new base

A CHARITY boss was all smiles after she picked up an award for her long-service working at an organisation that helps families.

Mary Turner has worked at Home-Start Dudley for 20 years and her hard work was recognised at a three-day training event. She was a founding member of the family support charity and continues to work for the organisation as chairwoman.

The award comes shortly after the Dudley team moved from their old offices at Dudley Court North to a new base on The Waterfront at Brierley Hill.

Previously, they shared a building with children's charity Barnardo's but have now moved in with Age UK Dudley.

Home-Start Dudley provides support to families who have children under five across the Dudley borough. The charity also helps families with disabled children, parents who have multiple births and those that may face difficulty with parenting.

Mrs Turner said: "It's been a good 20 years because we're all so committed to providing a good service to all of our referrals. The chief executive of Home-Start UK presented the award at the end of a three day training event and it was a complete surprise, I had no idea.

"He said he was going to embarrass someone and then it turned out to be me."

The 73-year-old added: "It's a wonderful service because we are able to go into the family home and support them with what they feel needs.

"But we're continually looking for volunteers that can help us raise money so we can provide support to all of the people that we need to."

She was presented with a framed certificate and floral bouquet.

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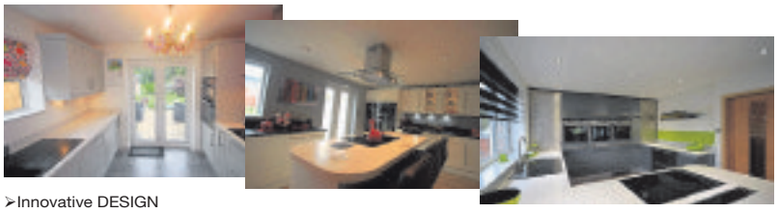

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New Year in Chester
with a visit to Liverpool

Pick of the week

Three days departing December 30

PRICE FROM £179

Visit two fascinating cities in the north west plus bring in the new year with a gala dinner and celebrations till midnight.

Chester is one of the best preserved cities in Britain which is famed for its black and white architecture. The Roman and medieval walls extend for three kilometres to form an almost complete circuit around the city - they are entirely walkable and offer remarkable views

Other landmarks which make the city unique include the Rows, a galleried tier of shops dating back to medieval times, the Roman Amphitheatre, the Victorian Eastgate clock plus the beautiful red sandstone cathedral.

In Liverpool, Albert Dock has been part of the landscape for over 160 years and boasts magnificent architecture, with the largest group of Grade I-listed buildings in the UK. It is also home to a number of modern attractions including Tate Liverpool, the Maritime Museum (both with free admission), the award-winning Beatles story - the largest permanent attraction in the world dedicated to the fab four, and of course, not forgetting the world famous Mersey Ferries (entrances payable locally).

On New Year's day an optional excursion is offered to Chester Zoo. With over 11,000 animals and 110 acres of award-winning zoological gardens, it's one of the best zoos in the world.

PRICE INCLUDES
- Return coach travel
- Two nights half-board accommodation
- New Year's Eve party
- Full day in Chester
- Visit to Liverpool
- Optional Chester Zoo excursion offered
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Emmerdale Tour

Two days departing Sept 26 and Oct 11

PRICE FROM £149

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visit to the Emmerdale filming set on the Harewood Estate with a guided 90-minute walking tour
- Visit to Esholt - original 'Emmerdale village' including a stop at the 'Woolpack'
- Visit to Saltaire village and the Salts Mill
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Christmas at Chatsworth

Two days departing November 14

PRICE FROM £119

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Entrance to Chatsworth house and gardens
- Visit to Meadowhall Shopping Centre
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Classical Spectacular
at the Royal Albert Hall

Two days departing November 22

PRICE FROM £139

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Choir seat for the concert (upgrades offered)
- Sightseeing tour of London or time to shop and sightsee
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Saturday Night London Theatre
Go as you please

Two days departures most weekends

PRICE FROM £99.95*

- Ticket for the Saturday evening performance of a West End show of your choice
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a choice of four-star London hotels
- Option to depart on a Friday or Sunday also offered
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

** Please note the "from" price and price bands vary for each show*
Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

York, Harrogate and the Yorkshire Dales

Four days departing October 16

PRICE FROM £209

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Full day in York
- Scenic coach tour of the Yorkshire Dales stopping at Grassington and Pateley Bridge
- Visits to Skipton, Harrogate and Haworth
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

The Pickering 1940's Weekend

Two days departing October 17

PRICE FROM £89.95

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visits to Pickering and Scarborough
- Optional North Yorkshire Moors Railway excursion
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Colourful Cornwall,
St Ives, Padstow and Falmouth

Four days departing Oct 2 and 2016 dates*

PRICE FROM £229

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Entrance to Trebah Gardens
- Visits to Falmouth, St Ives, Padstow and Penzance
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

* This break also departs on March 18, April 1, May 16, July 8 and September 30, 2016

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Enchanting Scottish Homes and Castles

Five days departing October 25

PRICE FROM £349

- Return coach travel
- Four nights half-board accommodation
- Guided tour of Bowhill House
- Visit to Floors Castle
- Guided tour of Drumlanrig Castle
- Visit to the New Lanark World Heritage Site
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Disneyland® Paris
Bonfire and Fireworks

Three days departing November 1

PRICE FROM £199*

- Return coach travel and Channel crossings
- Two nights bed and breakfast accommodation at Disney's® Hotel Santa Fe
- One day Hopper ticket to both Disneyland Park® and Walt Disney Studios® Park
- Services of a tour representative

*Based on two adults sharing, children aged 3-11 from £119 (conditions apply)

Please note this trip cannot be booked online

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Krakow

Four days various departure dates 2015/16

PRICE FROM £399

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided sightseeing tour of Krakow
- Visit to the castle district
- Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau (included but optional)
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

Lake Garda
Venice and Verona

Eight days various departure dates 2015/16

PRICE FROM £599

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation
- Tour of Lake Garda
- Guided sightseeing tours of Venice and Verona
- Tour of the Dolomites (with an optional cable car ride payable locally)
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

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Amsterdam, Delft and the Girl with the Pearl Earring

Pick of the week

Four days departing October 16

PRICE FROM £269

After completing her world tour, which attracted 2.2 million viewers, the 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' has returned to her newly refurbished home at the Mauritshuis Museum.

Painted by the master of light, Johannes Vermeer, around 1665, she is one of the stars of the Dutch Golden Age and continues to fascinate historians, novelists and filmmakers alike.

A visit is included to the Mauritshuis Museum in the Hague where some 800 unique works by Dutch and Flemish masters from the Golden Age can be seen. The star attraction is undoubtedley Vermeer's enigmatic 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' and 'The Goldfinch' by Carel Fabritius a close second. This is followed by a visit to Delft, one of the prettiest cities in Holland and birthplace of Vermeer, for some free time.

A full day is spent in the Netherland's capital city, Amsterdam. Built on a network of canals this is a beautiful place to explore. Maybe take a stroll alongside the water, across quaint bridges and through the streets with their grand facades.

For a great way to see the city canal cruises are also available. Another highlight is The Rijksmuseum and there are also numerous diamond factories for which the city is famous. (Entrance fees payable locally).

INFO

- Return coach travel and Eurotunnel crossing
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Full day in Amsterdam
- Visit to Delft
- Visit to Mauritshuis Museum in the Hague
- Services of a tour driver and tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Paddy Power Gold Cup

Two days departing November 14

PRICE FROM £99

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Entrance to the Best Mate enclosure
- Visit to Bath
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

York, Harrogate and the Yorkshire Dales

Four days departing October 16

PRICE FROM £209

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Full day in York
- Scenic coach tour of the Yorkshire Dales stopping at Grassington and Pateley Bridge
- Visits to Skipton, Harrogate and Haworth
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Saturday Night Theatre by rail

Two days departures most weekends

PRICE FROM £159.95

- Return standard class rail travel to London (upgrade offered)
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a choice of four-star London hotels
- Ticket for the Saturday evening performance of a West End show of your choice
- Free time in London
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Please note the "from" price and price bands vary for each show
Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

Poldark's Cornwall

Four days departing October 2

PRICE FROM £259

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Visit to the Poldark mine for a tour
- Visit to the Smugglers Museum
- Coach journey along the Cornish coast
- Visits to Padstow, Charlestown and Mullion
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

HRH The Prince of Wales's Gardens at Highgrove

Two days departing October 4

PRICE FROM £149

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Tour of the gardens at Highgrove
- Tour of the Cotswolds with visits to Stow-on-the Wold and Bourton-on-the-Water
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Elvis Exhibition at The O2 London

Two days departing October 24

PRICE FROM £115

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Ticket to the Elvis exhibition at the O2
- Free time in central London
- Visit to Greenwich
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Yorkshire Cruise and Steam

Three days departing October 9

PRICE FROM £169

- Return coach travel
- Two nights half-board accommodation
- Visits to Holmfirth, Skipton, Grassington and Haworth
- Cruise on the Leeds Liverpool Canal
- Journey on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway
- Coach tour of the Yorkshire Dales
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

London Weekend by rail

Two days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £129.95

- Return standard class rail travel (upgrade offered)
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a choice of four-star London hotels
- Free time in London
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Three-day option also offered from £189.95
Organised by Omega Short Breaks (ABTA Y5914)

Santander and Green Spain

Six days various departure dates 2016

PRICE FROM £429

- Return flights
- Five nights half-board accommodation
- Guided tour of Santander
- Excursion taking in the Picos de Europa national park
- Two optional excursions offered
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Air Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

Bruges by Eurostar

Four days various departure dates 2015/16

PRICE FROM £279

- Return standard class seat on Eurostar
- Return rail connection to London
- Return coach transfers overseas
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided walking tour of Bruges
- Visit to a traditional chocolate maker
- Visit to Ypres and the First World War battlefields
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally
Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744)

Paris and the Moulin Rouge

Four days departing October 16

PRICE FROM £389

- Return coach travel and Eurotunnel crossing
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Entrance to the Moulin Rouge to see the show with a half bottle of champagne, wine or a non-alcoholic drink
- Sightseeing tour of Paris by coach
- Evening meal in a Parisian restaurant
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Fundraisers hit right notes for hospice

Mary Stevens Hospice events manager Charlotte Schofield (left) with founder and director of Got 2 Sing Beth Dunn

A CHOIR will take to the stage at one of the West Midlands' most prestigious venues next month for a charity fundraiser.

Members of the Got 2 Sing choir in Wolverhampton will perform a catalogue of British hits from the likes of Queen, The Beatles and Elton John to raise money for Stourbridge charity Mary Stevens Hospice.

The gig, on September 20, will be the second time the group has performed at the venue after an appearance in 2013. The singers have spent hours rehearsing for the event.

Founder and director of Got 2 Sing, Bet Dunn, said: "If it is anything like our last performance at the Symphony Hall it will be a wonderful concert."

The Wolverhampton choir will be joined by seven other Got 2 Sing choirs – 420 members in total – from across the West Midlands, Shropshire and Hereford.

The charity, Mary Stevens Hospice, offers specialist care for people living with cancer and other life-limiting illnesses who are unlikely to be cured, as well as support for the patient's families and carers.

Charlotte Schofield, lottery and special events manager for the hospice said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for the Hospice to partner with such a successful and talented group of local people, raising vital funds to support patient care as well as for their families."

These services are provided free to those who need them throughout the Dudley borough, as well as parts of South Staffordshire, Wyre Forest, Sandwell, Hereford and Worcester.

Tickets for the concert on cost £20 (adults) and £16 (under 16s) and can be purchased from the Symphony Hall at www.thsh.co.uk. Further details can be found at www.got2sing.co.uk

Alexandra, queen of a sizzling show

REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

The Bodyguard, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE summer blockbuster has arrived in Birmingham with The Bodyguard, a show that delivers an unbeatable blend of glamour, romance and high-energy R&B music.

Based on Lawrence Kasdan's screenplay for the hit 1992 movie of the same name that starred Whitney Houston and Kevin Costner, it tells of the rollercoaster relationship between a pop star and her minder, with a creepy stalker lurking in the shadows.

It has a songbook of much-loved chart-toppers from the career of tragic star Whitney Houston.

This show needs a big star to take on the role of the iconic Rachel Marron — and it's got one with plenty of X-Factor in Alexandra Burke. Right from the start with the Queen of the Night number, Miss Burke owns the stage with her interpretation of the feisty diva. She's stunning, sexy and soulful, and as her voice warms up she just gets better and better.

Sexy and soulful — Alexandra Burke in The Bodyguard *Photo by Paul Coltas*

Dance

Not only does she shine in the spotlight with the big ballads but she wows the audience with bootilicious dance routines and emotional dramatic scenes. Surely the fact that she once had a stalker helps her empathise with Marron's plight.

There is chemistry between her and Stuart Reid as security expert Frank Farmer. Whilst an hilarious karaoke bar scene shows he will definitely not be duetting, he does have dignity and gravitas as the determined protector.

There is a fine supporting cast and production values of the calibre one would expect from a West End hit.

Melissa James, as Rachel's overshadowed sister Nicki, is in fine voice for Saving All My Love and the sisters' powerful duet Run To You is one of the highlights of the show.

Dry wit comes from Adam Venus as Marron's publicist, Mike Denman radiates menace as her crazed fan whilst Xhanti Mbonzongwana turned the cute factor to max as Marron's hip-hop dancing young son Fletcher.

Designers Tim Hatley and Duncan McLean have created an impressive set that lends a cinematic feel with its clever way of pulling in and out like a lens, and using video techniques. Thea Sharrock's directing is pacy. The only minor flaws are that the threat to the central character is not clear in the confused nightclub scene — that ends with the iconic rescue by her bodyguard — and not all the audience saw the gunman at the front of the stalls for the climatic finale.

And what a finale... Miss Burke's performance of I Will Always Love You in a glittering gown atop of a rising platform was pure theatrical magic.

It prompted a standing ovation that turned into a dance party as the cast returned for a sing-along I Wanna Dance With Somebody.

The Bodyguard is on at the Hippodrome until September 5 and it's going to be the hottest ticket in town.

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Dogs of War

New musical Dogfight preview – See Page 27

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

Mica Paris and Shaun Williamson star in Love Me Tender – Page 27

For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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Cloud Atlas

Sunday, 7pm
Robin 2, Bilston
Cloud Atlas, The Classic Rock Society's best newcomer of 2014, is the new project from Heidi Widdop (Mostly Autumn, Stolen Earth). It is emotional, dark rock.
Visit **www.therobin.co.uk**

The Fratellis

Thursday, 7.30pm
O2 Academy, B'ham
The Glasgow trio are back with a new album, Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied, the sound of a band at its peak. It's packed full of fun, is vibrant with energetic soul, an album that oozes confidence.
www.02academybirmingham.co.uk

Joyce Sims

Thursday, 6pm
The Jam House, B'ham
A gifted singer/songwriter, musician, and producer, New Yorker Joyce Sims became one of the hottest dance floor Divas during the late 80s and continues to make music today.
Visit **www.thejamhouse.com**

Hamlet

Friday, 6pm
Wightwick Manor, W'ton
Join the Prince of Denmark as he battles his inner demons and seeks to avenge his late father. This is the second night for this production at Wightwick Manor
Visit **www.nationaltrust.org.uk**

POP & ROCK

Green Man Festival
Thurs - Aug 23
Brecon Beacons, Wales
www.greenman.net

Amped Local Band Night
Friday, 7pm, £5.50
Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Bon Giovi
Sat at 7pm, £12/£13
Robin 2, Bilston
WV14 7LJ
Call 01902 401211

Cloud Atlas
Sun at 7pm, £12/£15
Robin 2, Bilston
WV14 7LJ
Call 01902 401211

Remode
Thur at 7pm, £14/£14
Robin 2, Bilston
WV14 7LJ
Call 01902 401211

Yr Welcome Birmingham
Sat at 2pm - 11.45pm, Sun at 2pm - 11.45pm, £7.50 - £10
The Wagon & Horses, Birmingham, B9 4ED.
Call 0121 772 1403

Dream World Tour
Mon at 8.30pm, £5.50
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Fathoms
Thu at 7pm, £6
The Rainbow, Birmingham, B12 0LD. Call 0121 753 1818

U2 360: The Complete U2 Experience
Sat at 7pm - 11pm, £10
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

The Fratellis
Thu at 7.30pm - 11.30pm, £22.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Punk'd
Fri at 7pm,
Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

The Guns N Roses Experience: Guns N' Roses Tribute
Fri at 7.30pm, £8
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN.
Call 01384 397177

FOLK & ACOUSTIC

Irish Music Session
Wed at 8pm,
Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

Open Mic Night
Mon at 8.30pm, Free
Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

Sandpiper Folk Club Night
Wed at 7.45pm,
Pigot Arms, 11 High Street, Pattingham, Wolverhampton, WV6 7BQ.
Call 01902 700207

Common Folk: Singers' Night
Thu at 8.30pm,
Pelsall Cricket & Sports Club, Walsall Road, Walsall, WS3 4BP. Call 01922 682018

Brewood Acoustic Club
Thu at 8pm,
Brewood Cricket Club, Four Ashes Road, Brewood, ST19 9HX.
Call 01902 850422

Country Music Nights
Sun at 8.15pm, £2
Swan With Two Necks, Longdon, WS15 4PN.
Call 01543 491570

SOUL AND JAZZ

Joyce Sims
Thu at 8.30pm, £8
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Solid Soul
Fri - Sat at 11pm - 2am, Sat - Sun at 11pm - 2am, £5 - £10
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU. Call 0121 200 3030

Soul Junction
Fri, 8.30pm, £8/£10
Robin 2, Bilston
WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Musical Picnic: Andy Usherwood
Sat at 10.30am - noon, Free
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Youngblood Brass Band
Wed at 8pm - 11pm, £15
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

CLUBBING

Killer Wave
Sat at 10.30pm, Free
The Bulls Head, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8HW.
Call 0121 256 7777

Relative
Fri at 10pm, Free
The Bulls Head, Birmingham, B13 8HW.
Call 0121 256 7777

All Hands On Decks: World Service
Fri at 8pm, Free
Light House, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HT.
Call 01902 716055

Vice Is Nice
Sat at 4pm - 10pm, Free
The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0LD.
Call 0121 753 1818

THEATRE

Family Fun Festival 2015: Charlie & Matilda's Marvellous Medicine: Out Of The Box
Fri at 7pm, £6 - £8
Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.
Call 01527 577330

Disney's Beauty And The Beast: The Harlequins
Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
£9.25 - £39.25
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE.
Call 01527 65203

Hamlet
Fri at 6.30pm - 9.30pm,
£8 - £35
Wightwick Manor and Gardens, Wolverhampton, WV6 8EE.
Call 01902 760100

Family Fun Festival 2015: 2faced Dance: Kapow
Fri at 11.15am, 1pm, Free
Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ. Call 01527 577330

That'll Be The Day
Thu at 7.30pm, £11 - £24
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

The Bodyguard
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm, 7.30pm, Tue at 7.30pm, 7.30pm, Wed at 2pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,
£18 - £49.50
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

DANCE

Bhangra Folk Stars
Saturday, 6pm
£13.75
Civic Hall, Wolverhampton WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

COMEDY

Comedy Carousel & Real Food Canteen
Thu at 7pm - 11pm,
£5 - £19.50
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

Manford's Comedy Club
Sat at 7.30pm - 11pm,
£12.50
Players Bar Birmingham, B1 2HG. Call 0121 643 6817

ART EXHIBITIONS

20th-Century British Studio Ceramics
Fri at 10.30am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

Artist Development West Midlands
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG. Call 01922 654400

Love Is Enough
Fri at 10.30am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
£3 - £17
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

At Home With Vanley Burke
Fri at 11am - 6pm, Sat at 11am - 6pm, Sun at 11am - 6pm, Tue at 11am - 6pm, Wed at 11am - 6pm, Thu at 11am - 6pm, Free
Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

Small Worlds
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at noon - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG. Call 01922 654400

Animal Architecture
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU. 01902 552055

Takehisa Kosugi: Spacings
Fri at 11am - 6pm, Sat at 11am - 6pm, Sun at 11am - 6pm, Tue at 11am - 6pm, Wed at 11am - 6pm, Thu at 11am - 6pm, Free
Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

Happy Birthday, Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art!
Fri at 10.15am - 3.30pm, Sat at 10.15am - 3.30pm, Tue at 10.15am - 3.30pm, Wed at 10.15am - 3.30pm, Thu at 10.15am - 3.30pm, £1.50
Birmingham Back to Backs, B5 4TE. Call 0121 666 7671

The Art Of Pastels
Fri at 10am - 4pm, Sat at 10am - 4pm, Mon at 10am - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 4pm, Wed at 10am - 4pm, Thu at 10am - 4pm, Free
Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.
Call 01527 577330

TALKS

Simon Owen: Scaling Down Reality
Wed at 1.30pm, Free
Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, TF11 8UP.
Call 01902 376200

FAMILY EVENTS

At The Movies: Workshop
Sat at 2pm - 5pm, £2
Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, WS10 7DF.
Call 0121 556 0683

Rag Rug Bugs And Blooms: Workshop
Fri at 11am - 2pm, £2
Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses, Kinver, Stourbridge, DY7 6DL. Call 01384 872553

Dinosaur Craft Activities
Thu at 12am, £0.50 - £1
Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, WS10 7DF.
Call 0121 556 0683

Book/Library Days
Fri at 11am - 3pm,
Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath, B64 7JU.
Call 01384 569444

Children's Craft Club
Wed at 11am - 3pm, £1
Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath, B64 7JU.
Call 01384 569444

Bug Hotel: Workshop
Thu at 11am - 2pm, £2
Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses, Kinver, Stourbridge, DY7 6DL. Call 01384 872553

Peg Plane Magnets: Workshop
Fri at 11.30am - 3.30pm, £2
Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, TF11 8UP.
Call 01902 376200

Lights, Camera, Action! Summer Holiday Activities
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, £7.25 - £45
The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, DY1 4SQ.
Call 0121 557 9643

Giant Puppet Workshop
Wed at 10am - 3pm, Free
Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, WS10 7DF.
Call 0121 556 0683

Car Rallies
Sat at noon, Sun at noon,
Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, TF11 8UP.
Call 01902 376200

VIP Record Fair
Sat at 10am - 4pm,
The Custard Factory, Birmingham, B9 4AA.
Call 0121 224 7777

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

A soldier's cruel bet turns to love

On the razzle in San Francisco, some of the cast of new musical Dogfight, set at the time of the Vietnam War

A NEW musical set in San Francisco is being staged at a theatre above a Birmingham city pub.

Dogfight by Benj Pasek, Justin Paul and Peter Duchan, will be presented in the Old Joint Stock Theatre in Temple Road West until Sunday, August 16.

It is being performed by the Old Joint Stock Musical Theatre Company, bringing the show to London after it won acclaim in London.

The show – about a group of US Marines before they go to fight in Vietnam – is an adaptation of a 1991 film of the same name. The film explores the relationship between 18-year-old Corporal Eddie Birdlace and awkward, idealistic young waitress Rose, who he first approaches because of a cruel bet with his comrades.

Performances are at 7.30pm with 2pm shows on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are £15 from the box office on 0121 200 0946.

It is not the only new musical heading to the West Midlands. Love Me Tender, with Mica Paris and Shaun Williamson (see below) opens in Birmingham later this month. Then Kneehigh's Dead Dog In A Suitcase (And Other Love Songs), based on The Beggar's Opera, is at Birmingham Rep September 29 to October 3.

Paris Presley connection

SHE'S loving the show. Mica Paris, a soul star whose speed dial has featured Prince, Mary J Blige, Dionne Warwick and Natalie Cole, is thrilled to be starring in Love Me Tender.

The travelling production of the musical inspired by the music of Elvis Presley has been visiting towns and cities across the UK since June, and from August 24 to 29 will be staged at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre

"It's wicked," says Mica, one of the UK's most respected female singers with a career of Top 10 hit singles and albums worldwide. "We've been on the road for a bit now and I'm loving the show. We're laughing every night. For someone who was running in the opposite direction to the theatre, suddenly I love it."

Ah yes, lest we forget. Mica has a track record in theatre, well, sort of. Twenty-odd years ago, she starred in two West End Shows; Mama I Want to Sing and Sweet Lorraine. They were both successful but, strangely, served only to convince Mica that her future lay anywhere but on stage.

"The last time I did a play was 20 years ago and as much as everybody loved it, I wasn't mentally prepared for it. I was much younger then, so I couldn't cope."

Mica has changed her mind. And she's glad she did. But she hasn't turned her back on recording. She's been working on new material.

"I've been in the studio with Don Black," she said. "We've just done some work together. He put the orchestra on it after I'd done my vocals and it just sounds so amazing."

'We're laughing every night'

Rock 'n' roll band to play for charity

A ROCK 'n' roll band playing pop hits from the 1950s and 1960s are to perform at a village hall near Hagley.

Bev Pegg and his All Star Rock 'n' Roll Band will be appearing at Blakedown Parish Rooms, Belbroughton Road, for their nostalgic gig on Saturday. Recent shows in Blakedown and Stourbridge were both sell-outs.

Accompanying music scene veteran Bev will be Dutch Lewis on sax, pedal steel guitarist Maurice Hipkiss, Rod Kelly on keyboard, Roy Parry on bass and Ken Wright drums.

Profits will be donated to Age Concern. Doors open at 8pm. Tickets are £12, call Ken Cowdry on (01384) 392590.

Reggae veterans to get a dub makeover

WOLVERHAMPTON reggae legends Capital Letters are set to release a counterpart album to their latest record, which was named after their home city.

Earlier this year, the reunited reggae group released comeback 'Wolverhampton' to critical acclaim. The album's title track, about the city where the group formed back in 1971, has received radio play across Europe.

The group are to release a digital download called 'Wolverhampton in Dub' on October 16. The band is led by Junior Brown and Lukas Daley.

The new release will focus on the work of producer Dave 'Oldwah' Sandford.

TV comedy talent coming to marquee

A COMEDY club in Stourbridge celebrating its first birthday next month has announced a host of TV names will be performing there in future months

Fitz of Laughter Comedy Club moves to a monthly Friday night slot from September in a marquee at Katie Fitzgerald's, Enville Street. Headliner at the anniversary gig on September 11 is former Xtra Factor host Matt Richardson. Top of the bill on October 2 is Iain Stirling, from TV's The Dog Ate My Homework. Archie Kelly —Kenny Snr in Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights — appears on November 13. See www.wegottickets.com/comedy/event/328539

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, August 13, 2015

The Granary Grill has a delightful dining room

Hickory smoked sticky spiced pork ribs

Tender sea bass fillet

Deep fried avocado with blue cheese dressing

Sautéed new potato salad with pancetta lardons

When the chips are down, things grill only get better

By Andy Richardson

WHAT'S that splat?" The Queen of Puds was looking dismissively at her plate, as though a seagull had pooped right in the centre.

"What splat?" "That one there, look."

She pointed to a rubbery square on her plate. It looked like a white-chocolate-jelly and added nothing to an otherwise decent dish.

"That, that splat. Oh My God, you're not going to put that in the review, are you?" And she clasped her hand to her mouth, as though to prevent any more words from falling out.

The Queen Of Puds has been absent from reviewing duties for a year. Bringing babies into the world has denied us of her entertaining presence. But she returned with a vengeance during a dinner a deux at The Granary Grill, in Weston Park.

The Grill is a delightfully located dining room, right in the heart of the Weston Park Estate. Light and airy and offering views over a courtyard and pretty garden, it's a sophisticated steak joint for those willing to travel out of town. Somehow, it's never quite captured the public imagination in the way that similar venues have.

The reason for that is hard to discern, but it's not down to poor service.

Our starters were decent, if unremarkable. I ate a warm, sautéed new potato salad with pancetta lardons, cherry tomatoes and roast garlic, while The Queen of Puds tackled a deep fried avocado with a blue cheese dressing. The salad was reasonable, though the potatoes lacked any crunch or crispy from their sautee pan. The avocado was fine, without hitting any culinary heights. The accompanying blue cheese dressing was pleasant.

Our mains were better. The Queen of Puds ate the fish of the day, a generous sea bass fillet that had been cooked beautifully. It was arguably the stand-out dish.

I ordered the hickory smoked sticky spiced pork ribs with chips and a garnish. The ribs were great – a treat. The pot of accompanying sauce was delightful. Simultaneously sweet, spicy and hot, it added peppery piquancy to a damn good dish.

But the chips were dreadful. There were five of them. Yes, five. They came in a sad bowl, looking like giants' amputated fingers. One potato, sliced five ways and dropped in the fryer. That was it.

Middle-aged, slightly-overweight fellas need small portions. But they don't want to be able to count the number of chips on one sorry hand. The chips were down, make no mistake. I'd rather have eaten a bag of McCain's Gorgeous Chips.

And so would The Queen of Puds. But she had other things on her mind. Dessert. And she was on record-breaking, Olympic Gold Dessert Medal-Winning form. as we went for five. Every dish on the menu was consumed, namely potted peach with ricotta ice cream and fresh raspberries, a chocoholics plate, apple galette served with decent ice cream and the pick of the bunch. And, finally summer berries.

The Granary Grill offers a delightful dining room, great service and an uncomplicated menu. The execution of dishes is okay, but not great. Minor refinements and finessing of dishes would make a big difference. It's the tiniest of tweaks here and there, more accurate seasonings, better cooking, you know the drill – just don't order the chips.

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CHOICE

Alesha Dixon

The Saturday Night Story (ITV, 8pm)
Part one of two. Celebrating the best-loved and most watched moments from Saturday night TV, including documentaries and interviews with stars of the past and present. The first show looks at how dancing has evolved from being the supporting act to the main draw, with the advent of programmes like Strictly Come Dancing. The spotlight is also on the best pranks played on the public and celebrities in hidden camera phenomenon shows like Beadle's About and Ant & Dec Undercover. Narrated by Stephen Mulhern.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **10.30** VJ Day 70: The Nation Remembers. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** VJ Day 70: The Nation Remembers. **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.15** Pointless Celebrities. (R)

6.00 BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.15 Film: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. (1989) The intrepid archaeologist sets out to find his estranged father, who has gone missing while searching for the Holy Grail. Once reunited, the duo team up to finish the task and locate the sacred relic before the Nazis get their hands on it. Action adventure sequel directed by Steven Spielberg, starring Harrison Ford, Sean Connery, Alison Doody, River Phoenix, Julian Glover and Denholm Elliott.

8.15 The National Lottery: Five Star Family Reunion. A UK family and their long-lost overseas relatives must work together in order to win a once-in-a-lifetime reunion in a five-star location. The overseas family must answer questions to win time for their relatives in the UK studio, who will then individually answer questions against the clock. Nick Knowles hosts. Includes the all-important weekend draw.

9.10 Casualty. Dylan creates a scene in front of his colleagues when he hits back at staff nurse Lofty, so Connie gives him one day to prove he is fit enough to carry out his medical duties. Tess's son Sam visits the hospital and introduces her to her first grandchild, meaning she has a difficult decision to make. Meanwhile, after helping Max out with options for the big day, Big Mac is overjoyed when he is asked to be best man at his wedding to Zoe, and Ethan takes the opportunity to ask Honey out after her unsuccessful date.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Southampton v Everton at St Mary's Stadium and Tottenham Hotspur v Stoke City at White Hart Lane; National Lottery Update.

11.40 Rugby Union. England v France.

12.40 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.45 BBC News.

BBC2

7.25 Film: San Demetrio, London. (1943) **9.00** More Creatures Great and Small. (R) **9.30** More Creatures Great and Small. (R) **10.00** The Women's Football Show. **10.30** Great British Menu. (R) **11.00** Great British Menu. (R) **11.30** Alex Polizzi: Chefs on Trial. (R) **12.30** Omar Sharif: Talking Pictures. **1.00 Film:** Funny Girl. (1968) Musical biopic of Fanny Brice, starring Barbra Streisand. **3.25 Film:** Hidalgo. (2004) Period adventure, starring Viggo Mortensen. **5.30** Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth. (R)

6.30 Gardeners' World. Monty Don seeks help for his box hedges, which are still riddled with blight, and sets about growing mushrooms. Meanwhile, Rachel de Thame visits Highclere Castle in Berkshire. (R)

7.00 Proms Extra. Katie Derham is joined by Maestro Juanjo Mena to review Nicola Benedetti's performance of the Korngold Concerto, Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, and two Pastoral Symphonies.

7.40 Edwardian Farm. The team heads to Dartmoor to explore how shepherds took advantage of the landscape. Alex Langlands and Peter Ginn get to grips with shearing, while Ruth Goodman visits a wool mill. (R)

8.40 Dad's Army. The men of Walmington-on-Sea's Home Guard use up all their ammunition shooting at a passing aircraft, so Captain Mainwaring has to hold a court of inquiry. (R)

9.10 VE Day: Remembering Victory. May 8, 2015 marked 70 years since Winston Churchill announced the Second World War in Europe was over, prompting Britain to throw the biggest street party the country has ever seen. David Attenborough, Bruce Forsyth, Miriam Margolyes and June Whitfield are just a few of the well-known figures sharing their memories of the end of the conflict. Narrated by Julie Walters, with contributions from others including Johnny Ball, Honor Blackman, Jilly Cooper, John Craven and Una Stubbs. (R)

10.40 Film: The White Countess. (2005) Period romantic drama, with Ralph Fiennes and Natasha Richardson.

12.45 Dancing Through the Blitz: Blackpool's Big Band Story. (R) **2.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Super 4. (R) **7.45** Fish Hooks. **8.00** Young Justice: Invasion. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** Celebrity Squares. (R) **3.20** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.15** Catchphrase. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of viewers' videos, featuring a cat terrorising a postman and an accident at the top of the Eiffel Tower, as well as elaborate pranks. (R)

7.00 Keep It in the Family. Bradley Walsh hosts the game show in which families go head to head in a series of fun-filled rounds. Six Emmerdale stars face the drop as two families from London and Bolton decide whether to swap a prize, drop it or keep it in the family. Plus an aerial bike act performs, the Nanas are back, and a kids musical theatre group sing from "Annie".

8.00 The Saturday Night Story. Part one of two. Celebrating best-loved and most watched moments from Saturday night TV, including the evolution of dancing and the hidden camera phenomenon.

9.00 Film: The Bourne Supremacy. (2004) The amnesiac assassin is living quietly in hiding, until his former employers come after him again and murder his girlfriend. A CIA operation has ended in disaster, and those responsible intend to clear their names by implicating Bourne. As the former secret agent tries to evade the hitmen on his trail, he also struggles to piece together the truth about his past. Action thriller sequel, starring Matt Damon.

11.00 ITV News; Weather.

11.20 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as four contestants answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on ruthless quiz genius the Chaser. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Ejector Seat. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.35** The Grid. **7.00** London Triathlon. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Rude(ish) Tube. **1.25** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Newbury, Newmarket and Ripon. **4.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.10 Come Dine with Me. It is the final night in Manchester and glamorous goth Maria is serving her twist on Asian cuisine, which manages to impress daddy's girl Sasha. (R)

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Great Canal Journeys. New series. Veteran actors and married couple Timothy West and Prunella Scales celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with four adventures around the canal networks of Britain and France. In the first edition, the pair head to the West Country to travel along the fully restored Kennet and Avon Canal. Taking in the sights, characters and wildlife from Bath to Devizes, Wiltshire, the duo enjoy an eventful journey along the picturesque 21-mile stretch of water.

8.00 Walking Through History. Tony Robinson hikes up from Lyme Regis in Dorset to the Somerset Levels telling the story of the 1685 Monmouth Rebellion, an attempt to overthrow James II. Last in the series. (R)

9.00 Film: Red. (2010) A retired CIA agent survives an assassination attempt and realises something in his past has made him a target. He sets out to reunite the members of his old hit squad to find out who is trying to kill them and why, but in the process, uncovers dangerous secrets. Action thriller, with Bruce Willis and Morgan Freeman.

11.10 Film: Repo Men. (2010) A man employed to repossess artificial organs questions his career when he needs a mechanical heart he cannot pay for. Sci-fi thriller, with Jude Law and Forest Whitaker.

1.15 The Last Leg. (R) **2.15** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.20** Double Your House for Half the Money. (R) **5.15** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. (R) **5.25** Fifteen to One. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Cowboy Builders. (R) **11.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **12.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.25 Film:** North Sea Hijack. (1979) Thriller, starring Roger Moore. **3.20 Film:** The Dirty Dozen. (1967) Second World War action adventure, with Lee Marvin.

6.10 Sinkholes: Buried Alive. The underlying forces behind into sinkholes, which can occur gradually – when the surface subsides into bowl-shaped depressions – or suddenly, when the ground gives away. (R)

7.00 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A man in Cumbria takes issue with his neighbour's free-roaming menagerie of birds, and a pair of horse-breeders in North Wales clash with the owners of a yurt business. (R)

7.55 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Sheriff Paul Bohill tackles the case of a small debt owed by ex-footballer Neil "Razor" Ruddock to a kennel owner, before being forced to evict a school dinner lady in south London. Meanwhile, in the north of England enforcement agent Stewart MacCracken heads out with trainee Iain Taylor to confront a Yorkshire builder they need to get payment from at his home, while a reptile shop owner hit by online competitors urgently needs to pay a debt for the feed company he relies on to keep his animals alive. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the latest games, including Milton Keynes Dons v Preston North End and Queens Park Rangers v Cardiff City in the Championship, as well as all the goals from League One and League Two. Plus, a round-up of the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers.

10.25 Rob Brydon Live. A stand-up show recorded at Norwich's Theatre Royal during the comedian and actor's first UK tour in 2009, featuring comic tales, impressions, songs and anecdotes. (R)

11.20 The Great British Benefits Hotel. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Transporter: The Series. **4.00** Police Interceptors Unleashed with Vinnie Jones. (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **7.15** Don't Tell the Bride **8.15** Top Gear **9.15 Film:** The Mexican (2001) **11.10** Family Guy **1.30** People Just Do Nothing **2.00** Pramface **3.30** People Just Do Nothing **4.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 Natural World: Chimps of the Lost Gorge **8.00** Lost Land of the Volcano **9.00** The Young Montalbano **10.50** Top of the Pops 1978: Big Hits **11.50** It's Only Rock 'n' Roll: Rock 'n' Roll at the BBC **12.50** 4,000 Year Old Cold Case: The Body in the Bog **1.50** Lost Land of the Volcano **2.50** Delphi: The Bellybutton of the Ancient World **3.50** Close

ITV2

11.00 Take Me Out **12.10 Film:** Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey (1993) **1.55** You've Been Framed! Kids Special **2.55** You've Been Framed! **3.25 Film:** Jack and Jill (2011) **5.20** The X Factor: The Boss Looks Back **6.25 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **9.00 Film:** Practical Magic (1998) **11.10 Film:** The Matrix Reloaded (2003) **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.15** Life's Funniest Moments **2.35** Teleshopping **5.35** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.05 Rosemary & Thyme **12.05** Wycliffe **1.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.10 Film:** All Creatures Great and Small (1975) **4.55 Film:** Columbo: Last Salute to the Commodore (1976) **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.00** Wire in the Blood **1.30** Never the Twain **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

3.40 British Touring Car Championship Highlights **5.15 Film:** A View to a Kill (1985) **8.00** World Series of Darts: Perth **11.30 Film:** 30 Days of Night (2007) **1.45** I Want That Car **2.35** Movies Now **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

2.00 The Goldbergs **3.30** How I Met Your Mother **4.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **11.05** Gogglebox **1.05** Rude Tube **2.10** How I Met Your Mother **2.55** 2 Broke Girls **3.45** Rules of Engagement **4.10** Come Dine with Me: Made in Chelsea Special

Film4

11.00 The Lady Vanishes (1979) **1.00** Congo (1995) **3.10** The Rugrats Movie (1999) **4.45** Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **6.35** Multiplicity (1996) **9.00** The Five-Year Engagement (2012)

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 16

CHOICE

Abz

Country Strife: Abz on the Farm
(BBC2, 9.45pm)
New series. The former member of 1990s boy band 5ive and his girlfriend, singer-songwriter Vicky Fallon, try to lead a self-sufficient life by running a small holding in Wales, despite having no experience in farming. In the first episode, they seek advice from the residents of an eco village, go looking for suitable land and make their first attempt to buy livestock at auction.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Flog It! (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Animal Odd Couples. (R) **4.00** The Great British Bake Off. (R) **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** Earth's Natural Wonders: Vast Wonders. (R)

6.35 BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile. Joe Crowley and Anita Rani report from the Country Land and Business Associations annual game fair at Harewood House near Leeds. Joe tries his hand at kayak fishing and introduces his dog Oscar to the stars of the show at the event's gun dog competition. Anita talks to female clay pigeon shooters and conservationists trying to protect the endangered grey partridge. Plus, Tom Heap investigates land reform in Scotland and Adam Henson looks at country breeds in Yorkshire.

8.00 Fake or Fortune? Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould investigate more potentially valuable works of art, beginning by helping a man who believes he owns a painting by French post-impressionist Edouard Vuillard. The quest for provenance begins in Geneva, where Philip compares the picture with a huge Vuillard work created in 1919, trying to find out whether the same materials were used in both, while Fiona uncovers clues to the picture's origins in France and Holland. Once they have enough evidence, they seek the approval of the Wildenstein Institute in Paris – but these are the same experts who notoriously rejected a highly credible Monet back in the very first episode. Have they done enough to prove this picture is genuine? (R)

9.00 Partners in Crime. Part one of three. Tommy is sent on a secret undercover mission to unmask a Russian spy and discover what has become of a nuclear scientist who has gone missing.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2.

11.30 Film: New Town Killers. (2008)

1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

8.15 Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** Great British Menu. (R) **11.15** Great British Menu. (R) **11.45** Great British Menu. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** European Amateur Boxing Championships. **2.50** Equestrian. **4.00** Dancing Through the Blitz: Blackpool's Big Band Story. (R) **5.30** VJ Day 70: The Nation Remembers – Highlights.

7.00 Burma, My Father and the Forgotten Army. Griff Rhys Jones visits Ghana and Burma as he explores the stories of the Africans and Asians who fought for the Allies during the Second World War. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. The dragons give their opinions on ideas for an electric tuk tuk and a range of Korean inspired sauces – but the pressure proves too much for one would-be entrepreneur.

9.00 Odyssey. Odelle and Aslam are rescued from an awkward situation by Luc, who apparently has his own reasons for keeping Frank Majors alive. Back in New York, Sophia works with Peter.

9.45 Country Strife: Abz on the Farm. New series. The former boy band member and his girlfriend, singer-songwriter Vicky Fallon, try to start their own small holding in Wales, despite having no experience in farming.

10.15 Family Guy. Stewie and Brian use their time machine to help Chris pass his history test, but trouble ensues when the trio all get stuck in the past.

10.35 Family Guy. Peter and his cronies go on a worldwide quest to seek out and confront God about His messing with the outcome of the New England Patriots' football games.

11.00 Family Guy. Chris learns he is the heir his grandfather Carter's fortune, but he refuses to take the money – leaving Peter to resort to desperate measures to keep the wealth in the family.

11.20 Film: Let Me In. (2010) A bullied boy befriends a mysterious girl, unaware she is a vampire who is behind a recent series of killings. Horror remake, starring Chloe Grace Moretz.

1.05 Film: We Are What We Are. (2010) **2.30** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Super 4. (R) **7.45** Fish Hooks. **8.00** Young Justice: Invasion. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.35 Film:** Smokey and the Bandit. (1977) Comedy, starring Burt Reynolds and Jackie Gleason. **3.25 Film:** The Incredible Hulk. (2008) Comic-book adventure, starring Edward Norton. **5.30** The Chase. (R)

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Nature Nuts with Julian Clary. Julian meets a woman who takes care of thousands of injured hedgehogs and helps her check up on a former patient. He also uses cameras that can see by moonlight to help a woman who streams footage from her garden on the internet to observe an elusive family of badgers, and takes two "otter spotters" to visit a unique sanctuary. Last in the series.

8.00 Midsomer Murders. It's the day of the Little Crosby Folk Festival and organiser Toby Winning is found dead, having drowned in a bowl of eggs and live eels. The murder seems to have been inspired by a ballad made famous by the late, lamented star Johnny Carver. Then it comes to light the victim recently announced plans to move the event to a new location, which would have cost local entrepreneur Frank Wainwright dearly. Toby's estranged wife Alice also comes under suspicion, before two further killings take place, echoing more lyrics from the song. (R)

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Man and Beast with Martin Clunes. Part one of two. The comedy actor travels to Nepal, where he meets a farmer whose cows not only provide milk, but also the fuel for lighting and cooking in his home. (R)

11.15 56 Up. Another chance to see the 2012 instalment of the landmark documentary series, featuring an update on a group of participants whose lives have been chronicled since 1964. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.40** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.05** British GT. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year 2015. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.25** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Real Noah's Ark: Secret History. The story of Irving Finkel, an expert on ancient Babylon, and his discovery of a 4,000-year-old tablet that sheds new light on the biblical tale of Noah's Ark. Having spent 20 years translating the artefact, Finkel sets out to show that the narrative originated from tales that had been embedded in Sumerian and Babylonian society and literature for thousands of years. The ancient clay tablet is inscribed with the world's oldest language and gives detailed instructions on how to build an ark. Inspired by his find, Finkel and a team of archaeological boat builders set out to construct a real Noah's ark and discover if this coracle-shaped boat can float. (R)

8.00 Experimental. Tim Shaw and Buddy Munro go to the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia, and try riding down the slopes on a shovel. Tim also builds a football-firing air cannon to recreate an incident where a ball was fired from a coach, and rebounded back to be caught by one of its passengers. The duo watch a video of an unusual firework in a Thai religious festival, and build a giant rocket out of bamboo.

9.00 Film: Zero Dark Thirty. (2012) Premiere. A CIA operative joins a team of intelligence and military operatives in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. She spends the next 10 years searching for information on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, ultimately leading to the final raid on the terrorist leader's hideout. Kathryn Bigelow's fact-based drama, starring Jessica Chastain and Mark Strong.

12.05 Film: Splice. (2009) **1.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.05** Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.45** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.15** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. **7.50** Little Princess. (R) **8.00** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.15** Zack and Quack. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.00** LazyTown. (R) **9.30** Dora and Friends. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00 Film:** Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked. (2011) Comedy sequel, starring Jason Lee. **3.40 Film:** Willow. (1988) Fantasy adventure, starring Warwick Davis.

6.10 Film: Three Men and a Baby. (1987) The lives of three flat-sharing bachelors are turned upside down when they discover a baby left on their doorstep. Unfortunately, while trying to get to grips with the necessary parenting skills, they find themselves menaced by criminals searching for missing drugs. Comedy, directed by Leonard Nimoy, starring Tom Selleck, Ted Danson, Steve Guttenberg and Nancy Travis. Edited for language and product placement.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Police Interceptors Unleashed with Vinnie Jones. Reports of a handgun leads to a hotel being locked down while officers get prepared, while thieves crash a stolen car after a chase and are forced to flee on foot. (R)

9.00 Film: Yes Man. (2008) Premiere. A depressed and anti-social loans adviser attends a self-improvement course and decides to start saying yes to every opportunity that comes his way. His outlook is immediately transformed, but he soon realises that some invitations should not be accepted and struggles to find a balance in his life. Comedy, loosely based on the autobiographical book by Danny Wallace, starring Jim Carrey, Zooey Deschanel, Bradley Cooper and John Michael Higgins.

11.05 Film: Killers. (2010) Action comedy, starring Ashton Kutcher and Katherine Heigl.

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.10** Under the Dome. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Top Gear **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.00 Film:** Minority Report (2002) **11.20** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **12.30** Family Guy **12.50** People Just Do Nothing **1.20** Russell Howard's Good News **2.20** Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **2.35 Film:** Revenge of the Bridesmaids (2010) **4.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms Sunday Symphony **8.45** Pop Go the Sixties **9.00** Cilla at the BBC **10.00** Sinatra: All or Nothing at All **11.00** Eisteddfod 2015 **11.30** Elvis: That's Alright Mama 60 Years On **12.30** Sings Elvis **1.30** Sound of Cinema: The Music That Made the Movies **2.30** Treasures of the Louvre **4.00** Close

ITV2

11.45 Take Me Out **12.55** The X Factor: The Boss Looks Back **1.55 Film:** Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey (1993) **3.40 Film:** The Shaggy Dog (2006) **5.40** The X Factor: Cheryl's Classic Cuts **6.45 Film:** Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **9.00 Film:** Casino Royale (2006) **11.55** Safeword **12.35** Fake Reaction **1.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **1.50** Life's Funniest Moments **2.10** Meghan Trainor: The Hot Desk **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.30 Agatha Christie's Marple **5.40** Inspector Morse **8.00** The One and Only Cilla Black **9.00** The Mighty Mississippi with Trevor McDonald **10.05** Birds of a Feather **10.35** Northern Lights **11.35** Agatha Christie's Marple **1.25** Blue Murder **2.40** On the Buses **3.05** Movies Now **3.15** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

11.40 Pawn Stars **1.30 Film:** Captain Newman MD (1964) **4.10 Film:** Spartacus (1960) **8.00** World Series of Darts: Perth **11.30 Film:** Child's Play 2 (1990) **1.20** Hell on Wheels **2.05** Hogan's Heroes **2.30** Movies Now **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

2.35 How I Met Your Mother **3.30** The Goldbergs **5.00 Film:** Inkheart (2008) **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Rude Tube **10.00** Gogglebox **12.05** Tattoo Fixers **1.10** Young, Free & Single **2.15** Gogglebox **3.05** Melissa & Joey

Film4

11.00 Chalet Girl (2011) **1.00** Home Alone 3 (1997) **3.05** Ponyo (2008) **5.15** California Man (1992) **7.00** Evolution (2001) **9.00** Knight and Day (2010) **11.10** Underworld: Awakening (2012) **12.50** Floating Clouds (1955) **3.25** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Seduced by Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman hopes to make a fresh start with a new relationship in defiance of her father's wishes, and turns her back on old friends when they are suspicious of her boyfriend. However, she gradually comes to realise that he has a shady past and is not as perfect as he appears. Thriller, starring Josie Davis and Marc Menard. (2010)

TUESDAY
A Time to Remember, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A middle-aged single mother returns under a cloud to the family home for Thanksgiving, where she tries to heal the fractured relationship between herself and her estranged mother. However, any possible reconciliation is threatened by an unexpected and dramatic development. Drama, starring Dana Delany, Doris Roberts and Louise Fletcher. (2003)

WEDNESDAY
Transsiberian, BBC1, 11.35pm
American couple Roy and Jessie are heading from China to Moscow on the Transsiberian railway when they befriend fellow travellers Carlos and Abby. However, when Roy fails to board the train following a station stop, Jessie begins to suspect her new travelling companions are harbouring a deadly secret. Thriller, starring Woody Harrelson. (2008)

Beowulf, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

THURSDAY
I Dream of Murder, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A psychiatrist investigates the murder of a patient, but as the case progresses she is forced to face her own inner demons. Mystery, starring Jolene Blalock and Martin Cummins. (2006)

FRIDAY
Beowulf, ITV, 10.40pm
The realm of Danish King Hrothgar is terrorised by a fearsome monster. A renowned warrior arrives to slay the beast, but an encounter with its seductive mother gives rise to a terrible bargain with tragic consequences. Animated fantasy based on the English language's oldest surviving epic poem, using motion-capture technology to recreate real actors, including Ray Winstone and Robin Wright. (2007)

Famous faces take a trip down memory lane

Rock on Tommy – here's a chance to relive some of the best moments Saturday night TV has delivered over the decades.

Actually, let's qualify that – some of the best moments to feature in ITV's shows, because this is really just a low-budget way to fill up the schedules while the broadcaster gives itself a good, old-fashioned, pat on the back.

Last December, Michael Grade hosted a rather more serious and in-depth programme entitled The Fight for Saturday Night TV over on BBC Four. He was the ideal man to take charge, basically because he'd been in the thick of it himself, doing battle for both the Beeb and ITV at different times in his career.

The documentary examined how and why Saturday's evening schedule had become such a battleground over the years, and that it was a war for ratings that was still raging, with the heavyweights – Strictly Come Dancing and The X Factor – currently packing the biggest punches.

Over the years, ITV has probably fared the best out of the two stations; perhaps glitz, glamour and flashing lights sit more easily on the third channel than they do on the BBC, a place that no matter how hard it tries, can't shake of its mantel as a venerable institution. We're not sure we'd want it to, either.

So while Strictly may have bucked the trend by pummelling Simon Cowell's all-singing juggernaut into submission during the past few years, overall, ITV has featured more light entertainment classics than it can shake a stick at.

And there's one woman who will certainly feature highly in this short series. It may have been produced before Cilla Black's sudden death a fortnight ago, but as she had been a stalwart of Saturday nights on ITV thanks to Blind Date, you can bet she'll pop up before too long.

But there are plenty more celebrities and their programmes featured here.

'Rock on Tommy' – the words that open this article – is, of course, the once-famous catchphrase of Bobby Ball, and were always spoken to his comedy partner Tommy Cannon, usually accompanied by a pull on his brightly coloured braces.

They were popular with everyone from the age of five to 95, and had a long-running show that lasted from 1979 to 1988. It turned them from being popular on the comedy circuit into major stars and household names.

They're among the famous faces offering their opinions on Saturday night telly here, alongside the likes of Ant and Dec, Jonathan Ross, Vernon Kay, Bruce Forsyth, Dermot O'Leary, Amanda Holden, Petula Clark, Alesha Dixon and Marty Wilde.

Cannon and Ball aren't the only celebrities to become well-known thanks to weekend TV, as Gladiators' bad boy Wolf will tell you.

He and glamourpuss Jet are reunited by Ulrika Jonsson in Birmingham to talk about the programme's popularity, while Henry Kelly and Matthew Kelly relive the excitement they had while making Game For a Laugh.

Expect more fun and games from next week's concluding episode.

Ant & Dec feature, The Saturday Night Story, Saturday, ITV, 8pm

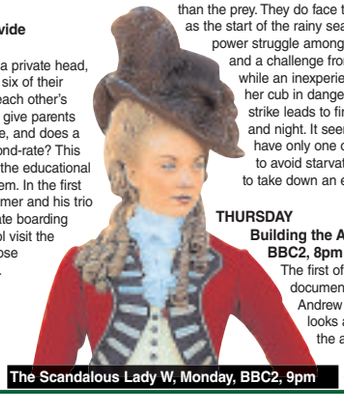
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The Scandalous Lady W
BBC2, 9pm
Her roles in Game of Thrones and The Tudors mean she's no stranger to tales of sex, power and intrigue, so who better to take the lead in this one-off period drama than Natalie Dormer? It tells the remarkable true story of Seymour, Lady Worsley, who created an 18th-century scandal when she left her husband Sir Richard Worsley (Endeavour's Shaun Evans) for his best friend George Bisset (Aneurin Barnard, who was recently seen in Cilla). Her spouse was so outraged by this turn of events that he sought compensation from her lover for defiling his 'possession'. However, Lady Worsley was about to create another scandal as she exposed the secrets of her marriage, in the process challenging ideas about a woman's worth.

Revenge Porn
Channel 4, 10pm
Anna Richardson goes to extraordinary lengths to investigate what happens when someone maliciously shares intimate photos of another person without their consent. Anna meets the victims of such actions, talks to experts and confronts the perpetrators of these crimes, the effects of which can have devastating and life-changing consequences. As she digs deeper, she discovers a community of men who take pleasure from threatening and shaming women online and decides to place herself at the epicentre of the revenge porn phenomenon.

TUESDAY
School Swap – The Class Divide
ITV, 9pm
Part one of two. Cameras follow a private head, his state school counterpart and six of their pupils as they spend a week in each other's worlds. Does going private really give parents and pupils a first-class advantage, and does a state education really mean second-rate? This documentary attempts to unpick the educational gulf dividing Britain's school system. In the first episode, headmaster Mark Mortimer and his trio of pupils from the 400-pupil private boarding establishment Warminster School visit the 700-pupil state secondary Bemrose School in Derby, run by Jo Ward.

WEDNESDAY
Return of the Giant Killers: Africa's Lion Kings
BBC2, 9pm
Lions have been in the news lately after the death of Cecil, a big cat who had been a leading attraction at a national park in Zimbabwe until he was killed by hunters. However, in this documentary, which catches up with the pride featured in Africa's Giant Killers: Natural World, the lions are definitely the hunters rather than the prey. They do face threats though, as the start of the rainy season sees a power struggle amongst the males and a challenge from a rival pride, while an inexperienced mum puts her cub in danger, and a lightning strike leads to fires burning day and night. It seems the cats have only one option if they are to avoid starvation – they have to take down an elephant.


The Scandalous Lady W, Monday, BBC2, 9pm

THURSDAY
Building the Ancient City
BBC2, 8pm
The first of two documentaries in which Andrew Wallace-Hadrill looks at the building of the ancient cities of Rome and Athens. He begins with in Greece, where 2,500 years ago, Athens gave birth to the idea of a city run by free citizens, with every aspect of daily life - from defence to waste disposal - controlled not by a king, but by the people. This led to a system of open government, and the first constitution laying down the rights of citizens - almost 2,000 years before Britain's Magna Carta.

FRIDAY
Katie Price: In Therapy
Channel 5, 9pm
The TV personality and glamour model undergoes an intense month of psychological evaluations conducted by Dr Claudia Bernet, a leading expert in women's mental health. Interweaving her life story with scientific assessments and the views of those who know Katie best, this documentary aims to help her discover what toll 20 years in the public eye has taken on her emotional wellbeing and make sense of her turbulent career and personal life.

The Best of Bad TV
Channel 5, 10pm
The series charting TV gaffes continues with a look at 2000s, a decade which brought the rise of the reality star and dubious game show formats. Last in the series.

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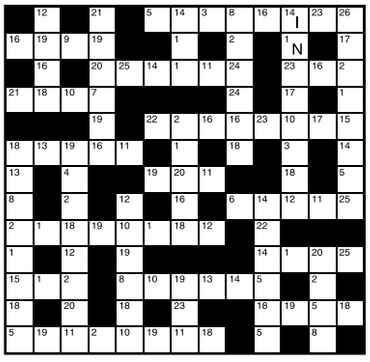
BRAIN GYM No.337

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



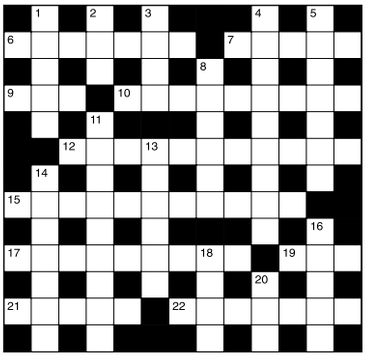
1 N	14 I
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
D	M	N	U	R	F	W	E	I	B	P	O	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	K	A	L	Y	V	S	X	G	T	H	C	J

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. An adornment so often misplaced (7)
7. Short presentation at court? (5)
9. Hostile observer (3)
10. Powered flight? (9)
12. Coolly having something to fall back on (4,7)
15. Suffering - under corrupt government? (2,1,3,5)
17. Important description of a plateau (4,5)
19. Start in the stable (3)
21. Rascal found in church, we hear (5)
22. Inferior articles that don't last long (7)

Down

1. Shape altered a great deal (5)
2. Took down a note (3)
3. Outstanding manager (4)
4. Pretty useless objects? (9)
5. Determine to find another answer (7)
8. Undiscovered talent developed (6)
11. Be a bad actor? (9)
13. Was shifty and naturally guarded (6)
14. Points to portents fluttering in the breeze? (7)
16. Not light, but it may go on one (5)
18. First mate right as always (4)
20. Get into the habit of an academic (3)

Quick Clues:

Across

6. Travel (7)
7. Static (5)
9. Behave (3)
10. Dishonest (9)
12. Almost (11)
15. Stupidly (11)
17. Robustness (9)
19. Chop (3)
21. Hurl (5)
22. Loss (7)

Down

1. Compel (5)
2. Curve (3)
3. Yield (4)
4. At first (9)
5. Bother (7)
8. Neglectful (6)
11. Chairman (9)
13. Group of emigrants (6)
14. Sudden collapse (7)
16. Send (5)
18. Discard (4)
20. Mine (3)

Sudoku

9			1		5			
7	8		4			1	5	
		5			2			7
	7			5				1
		8		6		2	4	
6					8		7	
8			2			9		
	1	3		4	9		6	5
					7			8

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	7	5	6	2	8	1	9	3
6	9	2	1	4	3	5	8	7
3	1	8	5	9	7	4	6	2
5	6	9	3	8	1	2	7	4
1	8	3	4	7	2	6	5	9
2	4	7	9	5	6	3	1	8
7	5	6	2	3	9	8	4	1
8	3	1	7	6	4	9	2	5
9	2	4	8	1	5	7	3	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Flash in the pan; 8 Baseball; 9 Tank; 10 Fitter; 12 Inland; 14 Agents; 16 Novice; 18 Carp; 20 Swallows; 22 Beside the mark. Down: 1 Cleaning; 2 Assent; 3 Lima; 4 Stallion; 5 Rental; 6 Main; 11 Resisted; 13 Nice work; 15 Napkin; 17 Volume; 19 Abet; 21 Ache. QUICK - Across: 7 Dishonourable; 8 Minister; 9 Tube; 10 Parent; 12 Ignore; 14 Leader; 16 Grimly; 18 Clap; 20 Strength; 22 Accommodation. Down: 1 Mitigate; 2 Thrive; 3 Unit; 4 Guarding; 5 Carton; 6 Glib; 11 Tiresome; 13 Relation; 15 Deploy; 17 Ignite; 19 Lack; 21 Rude.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. What was the nickname of Baron von Richthofen?
2. With which city do you associate the Raffles hotel?
3. Which monarch is found on a Penny Black stamp?
4. Who was the Indian boy in Kipling's Jungle Books?
5. Who wrote The Ginger Man?
6. In what year was Harrods founded?
7. What is the U.S. equivalent of the British postcode?
8. In what U.S. state is Yale University?
9. In what year was the Jarrow hunger march?
10. Which country is the 'Land of the Midnight Sun'?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Northern Territory; 2 The Boston Strangler; 3 Cheeses; 4 Desdemona; 5 A.A. Milne; 6 Venus; 7 Florence; 8 High speed train; 9 Elba; 10 Sweden.

Niner: BLOCKHEAD

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

349945 gives a dog,
57648 gives a bird,
217 gives a snake.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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The hotels featured in the holidays are from many well-known chains which all offer a range of amenities and most offer dining facilities on site or close-by.

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

For a brochure call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Discover the beauty of Sri Lanka, the warm tropical air, the colourful wild flowers and the jungle and visit three outstanding UNESCO World Heritage sites before the chance to relax at the Cinnamon Bey hotel, overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Enjoy an included visit to the famous Pinnawela Elephant orphanage, established in 1975 with just seven orphans, and now home to over 75 elephants of all ages.

Kandy, formerly isolated by dense jungle, was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings, and today custodian of Sinhalese culture. Here visit the fascinating Temple of the Tooth, which is said to hold Buddha's tooth, and is Buddhism's most sacred shrine on the island.

Also visit the cave temples of Dambulla, a UN World Heritage site, showcasing Sri Lanka's extraordinary artistic heritage. The caves are completely coverered by perfectly preserved frescoes and shrines, with hundreds of gold-coloured statues to admire.

There is also an included visit to the stunning Royal Botanical Gardens, planted over 150 years and covering a huge 150 acres, with the gardens holding thousands of plant species.

Enjoy a stay in the hill-station of Nuwara Eliya, a premier tea growing area. At nearly 7,000 feet above sea level. It is called 'Little England' due to its spring like climate, parks and golf course.

Also on the itinerary is a two-night stay in the south of Sri Lanka, close to the Yala National Park, famed for its high concentration of leopards. Here enjoy an exciting safari, where visitors can spot many.

For many, the highlight of the trip will be an included visit to Sigiriya, the 'Lion Rock', a 600ft granite tower with sheer cliffs on all sides crowned by the remains of a 1,500 year old royal palace.

FROM £1,599*

13 days
various departure dates

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return flights
- 11 nights half-board accommodation in a selection of three and four-star hotels
- Visits to Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage, Kandy and the Buddhist Monastery of Dambulla
- Jeep Safari in Yala National Park
- Visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens
- Guided tour of the 5th century Royal Palace at Sigiriya Rock
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

** Variable according to departure dates – please go to website for latest prices and availability*

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V74744, ATOL 3430)

For a brochure please call the Promotions Team on (01902) 319999 (Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm), or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Extended family semi with four bedrooms

THIS extended four-bedroomed semi at New Birmingham Road, Dudley, is for sale through G&T Properties at £229,000.

It has a porch, entrance hall, lounge with a period style fireplace, a dining room with patio doors, kitchen/breakfast room with a beamed ceiling, cushion-air floor covering, glazed ceramic wall tiling, spot lighting, a lobby, laundry, bedroom one en suite, dressing room/bedroom four, two further bedrooms, a bathroom, garage and garden and garden stores/workshop.

Call 01384 261997 or visit the website at www.gandtproperties.co.uk

Cul-de-sac location for three-bedroom detached

THIS modern three-bedroomed detached property in Bridle Grove, West Bromwich, has a pleasant cul-de-sac location. It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £245,000.

With majority double glazing and central heating, it has an entrance hallway, a lounge/diner with a gas fire and patio doors, a kitchen with cooker, hob and extractor, a ground-floor WC, utility room, three bedrooms, en suite and first floor family bathroom.

It also has a driveway, a garage and a rear garden with lawn and patio area and a gate to the side.

For further information call Paul Dubberley on 0121 5252111 or visit www.pauldubberley.co.uk

Jon Stanier

01384 77877

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WOLLASTON
THE MILL YARD
This distinctive, highly individual 2 Bed Apartment/Semi-Detached Bungalow provides really deceptive GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and "triple" glazed accom for sale as an ideal INVESTMENT(currently producing £450 pcm ex on 12 month AST) and is very conveniently positioned in this well known address. Porch, Hall, spacious Lounge, fitted Kitchen with built-in oven and hob, Laundry/Utility Room with guests W.C., 2 very well proportioned Bedrooms, fitted bathroom and off road parking to the front. EPC=D
Offers around £129,950

KINGSWINFORD
ROKEWOOD CLOSE
This superbly presented, beautifully improved and neatly appointed Modern One Bed Ground floor Flat is delightfully situated at the head of this popular Cul-de-sac and provides spacious well planned GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and Upvc DOUBLE GLAZED accom ideal for the First Time Buyer, single or retired couple. Hall, spacious Lounge, attractively fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, fitted Bathroom with shower, superb low maintenance rear Garden, side Driveway and Garage and lawned front Garden. EPC=C
Offers around £104,950

BRIERLEY HILL
LIMES AVENUE
Pleasantly situated in this popular and convenient address, this extended 2/3 Bed Semi-Detached provides spacious GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and DOUBLE GLAZED (mostly Upvc) and versatile accom ideal for the First Time Buyer, young family or for those with disabilities. Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Separate Dining Room/ Study/ Bedroom 3, DOWNSTAIRS SHOWER ROOM, 2 well proportioned Bedrooms, First Floor Shower Room, good sized pleasant Lawned Rear Gardens and Front Garden. EPC=TBC
Offers around £92,950

PENSNETT
CORBYNS CLOSE
This delightfully presented, and extended 3 Bed Detached provides spacious GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and UPVC Double glazed family accom pleasantly situated with distant views to the rear in this popular and very convenient cul-de-sac. Briefly comprises :- Hall, Spacious Lounge with Dining Area, Superb Refitted and extended Breakfast Kitchen, Downs W.C, 3 Good Bedrooms, Attractively Fitted Bathroom, Side Garage, Pleasant Lawned Rear Gardens with south westerly aspect and driveway to Front. EPC=E
£159,995 till 4/9/15

NETHERTON
THOMPSON CLOSE
Pleasantly situated in this popular and convenient cul-de-sac, this well presented 3 Bed End Townhouse provides deceptively spacious UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom with night storage heating and represents an excellent opportunity for the young family or Investor (currently let at £600 per calender month). Porch/ Hall, spacious Lounge, attractive Kitchen with built-in oven and hob, dishwasher and fridge/ freezer, Downs W.C. 3 good Bedrooms, fitted Bathroom with shower. Long block paved fore gardens and Garage to rear with parking space (reached by side accessway).EPC=E
Offers around £128,500

QUARRY BANK
BIRCH AVENUE
Pleasantly situated on a "corner plot" in this popular address, this attractively presented and improved 3 Bed Semi provides spacious GAS CENTRALLY heated and DOUBLE GLAZED accom ideal for the First Time buyer or young family. Porch, Hall, Spacious Lounge, Separate Dining Room/ Living Room, Kitchen, Large useful Outhouse, 3 Very Well Proportioned Bedrooms, Restyled Bathroom with shower, Side Garage, Driveway for 2 Cars and Pleasant Lawned Rear Gardens with private outlook. EPC=E
Offers around £111,950

PENSNETT
ROOKERY PARK
This 3 Bed Semi-Detached provides spacious GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom ideal for the young family or Investor in this popular and convenient address and is available with NO UPWARD CHAIN. Although requiring certain cosmetic improvements the property offers tremendous further scope and briefly comprises: Hall, Lounge, separate Dining Room, fitted Kitchen with built-in oven and hob, 3 good sized Bedrooms, Bathroom, good sized rear Garden and off road parking to front.EPC=D
Offers around £91,950

CRADLEY
COLLEY LANE
This unique individually designed One Bedroom Detached 'Cottage' provides thoughtfully planned GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom 'tucked away' in this convenient address and reached by a private driveway. Ideally suited to the Professional Singles or INVESTOR (PREVIOUSLY PRODUCING £450.00 pcm). Hall, Open Plan Lounge with Fitted Kitchen with built-in oven and hob, Bedroom, Shower Room and Blocked Paved Parking to the Front. EPC=D
Offers around £69,950

TIVIDALE
RED LION CLOSE
This delightfully presented, stylishly decorated Modern One Bed Ground Floor Flat provides deceptively spacious UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom with electric heating ideal for the First Time Buyer, single person or INVESTOR and is available with NO UPWARD CHAIN. Includes: Entrance Hall, spacious Lounge opening to Stylish REFITTED KITCHEN with built-in oven and hob, Inner Hall with Useful storage cupboards, Double Bedroom, SUMPTUOUS REFITTED BATHROOM, communally kept Gardens and Garage in separate block close by (requiring attention). EPC=E
Offers around £64,950

BRIERLEY HILL
SOUTH PARK MEWS
Attractively Presented 2 Bed Semi-Detached with GAS CENTRAL HEATING and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING in Convenient Cul-De-Sac close to local amenities. Hall, Spacious Lounge, Attractive Kitchen with electric Cooker, 2 Well Proportioned Bedrooms, Stylish Bathroom with Separate Shower, Lawned Rear Gardens with pleasant outlook and block paved Driveway to Front. No Pets/DSS/ Smokers. Deposit £750. Available Immediately. FEES APPLY EPC=C
£525 PCM EX

BRIERLEY HILL
JOHN STREET
Attractively Presented and Deceptively Spacious 2 Bed Victorian Intermediate Terrace in this Very Convenient Location with GAS CENTRAL HEATING and Mostly DOUBLE GLAZED Accommodation. Briefly comprises: Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, 2 Good Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower and Pleasant Rear Garden. No Pets/DSS/Smokers. Deposit £750.00. Available Immediately. FEES APPLY EPC=D
£525 PCM EX

NETHERTON
HALESOWEN ROAD
Spacious Attractively Refurbished 2 Bedroomed First Floor Flat, Very Conveniently positioned in the Heart of Netherton with GAS CENTRAL HEATING and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING. Hall, Spacious Lounge with separate Dining Area, Fitted Kitchen with built-in oven and hob, 2 Good Sized Bedrooms and Fitted Shower Room. No Pets/DSS/Smokers. Deposit £600. Available Immediately - FEES APPLY. EPC=D
£425 PCM EX

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New

KINGSWINFORD, Beachcroft Road

With an OUTDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL, this EXTENDED & EXPENSIVELY IMPROVED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME is well placed. Including a LARGE CONSERVATORY and THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS. Block paved driveway, GARAGE and an attractive rear garden. EPC D

£244,950

Gornal / Pensnett, Cassandra Close

Delightfully located upon Badgers Rise, this ATTRACTIVELY IMPROVED FOUR BEDROOM DETACHED FAMILY HOME offers an VERY SPACIOUS and WELL APPOINTED layout plus a GOOD SIZED CRETE PRINT STYLE DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and LEVEL, ATTRACTIVE GARDEN. EPC D.

New price £233,950

NETHERTON, Church Road

●●●REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE●●●VIEW EARLY●●● This SUBSTANTIAL & STYLISHLY DECORATED, FOUR BEDROOM, DETACHED PROPERTY comprises: Porch, Hall, Guests Cloakroom, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Breakfast Kitchen, Four Bedrooms (Master En-Suite), Family Bathroom, DOUBLE GARAGE, Garden. EPC D

New price Offers in Excess of £219,950

SEDGLEY, Gower Road, Northway

EXTENDED gas centrally heated, double glazed detached with good distant views comprising; enlarged entrance vestibule, 17ft living room, dining room with patio doors to uPVC CONSERVATORY, EXTENDED 18'3" kitchen, play/utility room & shower room. Three bedrooms (two with fitted units), bathroom. Wide garage, sheltered rear garden, block paved foregarden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £212,500

New

WALL HEATH, Windmill Grove

Enjoying this delightful cul de sac address close to excellent schooling, this ATTRACTIVELY IMPROVED THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED HOME offers a very generous and attractively appointed layout, plus a driveway / garage and an attractive, level garden. EPC TBA

£205,000

SEDGLEY, Tipton Road

Spacious, modernised, centrally heated (combi boiler), double glazed inter war semi detached of character within level walking distance of the Bullring comprising; porch, hall, dining room with bay (original fireplace), separate lounge, verandah, cellar, upgraded kitchen, utility section and cloaks. Three bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, lengthy driveway to a detached 19ft brick garage, secluded garden. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £189,950

New

KINGSWINFORD, Standhills Road

A BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED & EXPENSIVELY IMPROVED, SEMI-DETACHED BUNGALOW within this very popular address, offering a very spacious layout with TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, plus full width driveway, CARPORT and a large, superbly landscaped garden. EPC D

£184,950

DUDLEY, The Broadway

Fantastically presented traditional, uPVC double glazed, gas centrally heated semi-detached which has been extended and much improved by the current owner to a high standard. The property briefly comprises; entrance hallway, through lounge, breakfast room, refitted kitchen, utility. THREE BEDROOMS, enclosed rear garden, driveway to front. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £174,950

COSELEY, Gough Road

Deceptively spacious, three bedroom end town house situated in a popular area of Coseley, and within range of local amenities & railway station. Extended property benefits from uPVC double glazing, gas central heating, original feature fireplaces, two reception rooms, conservatory, bathroom. Private rear garden. 38 ft garage, two work shops with parking to front & rear. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £159,950

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SEDGLEY, Northway

EXTENDED, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached with flexible room arrangements comprising; porch, hallway, L shape through living room, dining room, rear hallway, cloakroom, secondary lounge, well equipped kitchen. Two staircases to first floor with FOUR BEDROOMS (one with bathroom en suite) and further shower room, Garage, parking, garden, EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £269,000

WOODSETTON, Bosworth Close, 'The Poplars'

REMARKABLY SPACIOUS! Situated upon CORNER PLOT a stylish, double glazed & gas centrally heated DETACHED comprising; reception hall, cloakroom, living room with bay, separate dining room, kitchen with a fine range of units, utility room. Principal bedroom with fitted units & shower room en suite, three further bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, Double (17'7 x 16'7) garage, professionally landscaped rear garden. EPC D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £249,950

GORNAL WOOD, Brick Kiln Lane

A conscientiously maintained comparatively spacious gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed detached family home with open aspect to the front enviably situated in favoured district. Accommodation includes spacious reception hall, fitted cloakroom, lounge and uPVC double glazed CONSERVATORY, separate dining room, kitchen, walk in utility. THREE DOUBLE BEDROOMS (two with wardrobes), bathroom, separate shower room, garage, delightful sheltered well tended rear garden. EPC :E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £230,000

COSELEY, Maslin Drive, Hurst Hill

Gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed detached bungalow in quiet secluded location. Accommodation includes; entrance hallway, living/dining room, kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, shower room. Driveway & parking, brick garage, garden. SEDGLEY EPC: D.

Offers in the region of £151,000

PENSNETT, Tansey Green Road

An IMPRESSIVE SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME which is IMMACULATELY PRESENTED and BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED throughout, with a re-fitted kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS and re-fitted bathroom, DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a LARGE LEVEL PRIVATE & SUNNY REAR GARDEN. EPC C

£149,950

WORDSLEY, Windsor Grove

Forming part of this very pleasant cul de sac, this SUBSTANTIALLY EXTENDED TRADITIONAL SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE offers an incredibly generous THREE BEDROOM layout, plus DOUBLE WIDTH DRIVEWAY and a pleasant, good sized garden. EPC D

£149,950

KINGSWINFORD, Rangeways Road

Located upon highly sought after 'High Acres', this DISTINCTIVE MODERN SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE is well placed for local shops / schooling and offers a spacious layout including THREE BEDROOMS, plus Driveway, GARAGE and a tiered garden. EPC D

£142,500

LOWER GORNAL, Elan Close

EXTENDED Freehold part gas centrally heated & UPVC double glazed semi detached within walking distance of 'Five ways'. Offering significant potential the accommodation provides;hall, cloakroom, storage cupboards, lounge, magnificent refitted 'hub of the house' kitchen with granite work surfaces/island unit/ integrated appliances, large laundry room. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garden, solar panel hot water. EPC: TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £135,000

PENSNETT, Thames Close

Benefiting from TWO RECEPTION ROOMS & A CONSERVATORY, this THREE BEDROOM PROPERTY offers SPACIOUS ACCOMMODATION and would make a PERFECT FAMILY HOME. Also comprising: Breakfast Kitchen, Shower Room, Attractive Gardens. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC:

£129,950

WOMBOURNE, Rushwater Close

A END TOWN HOUSE well placed within a small cul de sac, with DRIVEWAY & GARAGE, requiring UPDATING and IMPROVEMENT to enhance the well proportioned layout: Hall, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, THREE BEDROOM, bathroom and a good sized rear garden. EPC TBA

No upward chain £122,500

LOWER GORNAL, Boundary Hill

EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, majority double glazed semi detached within walking distance of village & having block paved off road parking comprising; porch, hallway, cloakroom, 16 ft lounge and brick/Upvc double glazed CONSERVATORY, extended/upgraded 17 ft kitchen; THREE DOUBLE BEDROOMS, bathroom. Wider than average garden, good distant views. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £118,000

COSELEY, Lime Street, Hurst Hill

A modernised, gas centrally heated, and either uPVC double or uPVC single glazed semi detached in quiet/convenient 'backwater' within walking distance of so many amenities. Accommodation includes; reception hall, dining room, lounge (with double French doors out to garden), upgraded kitchen, pantry. Three bedrooms (two with wardrobes), upgraded bathroom. Delightful garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £110,000

WORDSLEY, Guardians Walk

AN IMMACULATE, LUXURY APPOINTED, SECOND FLOOR TWO BEDROOM APARTMENT within this stylish modern development, offering an exceptional layout which is 'READY TO MOVE INTO', plus ALLOCATED CAR PARKING and SEPARATE VISITOR PARKING. EPC B

New price £109,950

DUDLEY, Chestnut Avenue

A good sized semi detached family home benefitting from gas central heating and double glazing and briefly comprising; entrance hallway, living room, kitchen-diner. Master bedroom with en-suite, two further bedrooms, ground floor family bathroom. Enclosed rear garden, driveway with ample parking and garage. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £104,950

UPPER GORNAL, Clarence Street

Fantastically presented, traditional terraced property situated in the popular location of Upper Gornal and benefitting from gas central heating, living room, dining room, kitchen, re-fitted family bathroom, two bedrooms, spiral staircase leading to loft room, enclosed rear garden, ideal for first-time buyers. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

New price WAS £104,950, NOW £100,000

LOWER GORNAL, Barr Street

EXTREMELY STYLISH! Tremendously modernised and fully refurbished gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed traditional terrace within walking distance of the village comprising lounge, inner hallway, dining room, cellar, utility room, refitted kitchen with a fine range of 'satin white' finish units and various appliances, two bedrooms, reappointed /re-tiled bathroom with white suite. Delightful sheltered rear garden. EPC Rating E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £98,000

UPPER GORNAL, Tenacre Lane

NO UPWARD CHAIN. This good sized property has the potential to be a superb family home. It is set in the popular Upper Gornal area, and benefits from entrance hallway, kitchen, dining room, utility, guest w.c. THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom. Front & rear gardens. EPC. T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £94,950

COSELEY, Andersleigh Drive

Conscientiously maintained GROUND FLOOR double glazed flat with allocated & secluded rear garden set at head of cul de sac in a convenient district briefly comprising; entrance hallway, kitchen with cream finish units, lounge, lobby, double bedroom, bathroom. Allocated parking, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £79,950

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DOWNING HOUSE, CATHOLIC LANE £349,950
SEDGLEY
•Modern detached house
•Four bedrooms
•Large breakfast kitchen
•Utility room, ensuite shower room
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING C

7 CHARNWOOD AVENUE O/A £250,000
SEDGLEY
•Detached bungalow with three bedrooms
•Enjoying a wide plot at the head of a cul de sac
•L' shaped living room comprising living area & dining area
•Tandem garage with further garage, attractive gardens
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

LAND ADJOINING 78 COCHRANE ROAD O/A £250,000
HOLLY HALL
•Level rectangular plot
•Outline planning consent for:
•Two pairs of three bedroom semi detached houses and
•A terrace of three, three bedroom houses
•SEDGLEY OFFICE

LAND ADJOINING 12 KETTLESBANK ROAD O/A £250,000
GORNAL WOOD
•Residential development site
•Outline planning permission
•Planning application P13/1140
•Situated within an established residential area
•SEDGLEY OFFICE

4 ELMWOOD RISE £249,950
SEDGLEY
•Detached house with four bedrooms
•En suite shower room off bedroom one
•Extended breakfast kitchen, utility room
•Private rear garden with excellent views
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING C

58 DUDLEY ROAD, SEDGLEY £219,950
•Traditional semi detached house with four bedrooms
•Exceptionally well presented & extended accommodation
•Extended lounge & kitchen extension, downstairs shower room
•Extensive driveway & beautifully landscaped level rear garden
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

12 CHEVENING CLOSE O/A £189,950
SEDGLEY
•Modern detached bungalow
•Two bedrooms, shower room
•Enviable position at head of cul de sac
•Pleasantly landscaped gardens
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

75 NORTHWAY £184,950
SEDGLEY
•Link detached house
•Well maintained & presented
•Three bedrooms
•Private rear garden
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

54 MOUNT ROAD £179,950
LANESFIELD
•Traditional detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Improved & extended
•Deceptive accommodation
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

601 BIRMINGHAM NEW ROAD O/A £175,000
COSELEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Extended & improved
•Attractively presented
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC C

27 VICTORIA ROAD O/A £169,950
TIPTON
•Spacious family home
•Lots of character
•Attached self contained annexe
•Good sized private rear garden
•SEDLGEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

53 WOLVERHAMPTON ROAD O/A £169,950
SEDGLEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Conservatory
•Ample off street parking
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

3 HIMLEY AVENUE £165,000
DUDLEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Sitting room/bedroom four
•Separate lounge & dining room
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

11 SUMMERHILL ROAD £155,000
COSELEY
•Detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Large bathroom
•Attractive rear garden
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

63 CINDER ROAD O/A £149,950
GORNAL
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•'L' shaped lounge/dining room
•Shower room
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

2A LANGLEY AVENUE O/A £119,950
COSELEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Extended kitchen
•Access to rear driveway
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING F

47 SPRINGFIELD GROVE £119,000
SEDGLEY
•End terraced house
•[Three bedrooms
•Large bathroom
•Good sized rear garden
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

32 CROSS LANE £104,950
SEDGLEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Upvc double glazing
In need of cosmetic updating
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING TBC

12 THISTLE CLOSE £79,950
SEDGLEY
•Semi detached house
•Three bedrooms
•Quiet cul de sac location
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

BUILDING PLOT ADJOINING 54 DEEPDALE LANE O/A £52,500
LOWER GORNAL
•Individual building plot
•Outline planning permission
•Excellent views to the rear
•Ideal for small developer or a self build project
•SEDGLEY OFFICE

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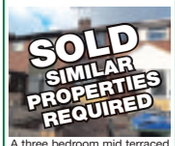
TIPTON
Sedgley Road East

Three bedroom semi detached property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, conservatory, shower room to the first floor, rear garden and driveway to the front. EPC Ordered.

£89,950

TIPTON
Heath Close



A three bedroom mid terraced house with hallway, lounge, large dining kitchen, upstairs shower room and garden to the rear. Located within walking distance to Dudley Port train station, local shops and excellent schools. Viewing is highly recommended. Epc - D.

£104,950

SEDGLEY
Off Lime Road

A spacious, very nicely presented four bedroom detached dormer bungalow located on a private road (shared with only one other property) with a good-sized driveway. Having a fitted kitchen, dining room, lounge,conservatory and a further reception room, two bathrooms and a downstairs wc. The property has great views from the rear, along with off road parking off High View (WV14 9RQ). No upward chain. Call now to view! EPC - D

£255,000

OLDBURY
Morgan Close

No upward chain! Three bedroom modern detached house briefly comprising entrance hall, downstairs wc, lounge, kitchen/dining room, conservatory, en-suite to master bedroom, family bathroom, garage, rear garden and driveway to the front. EPC - D

£150,000

STOURBRIDGE
Manor Road

●●LARGE FITTED KITCHEN●● EN-SUITE SHOWER ROOM●● A well presented three bedroom mid terrace briefly comprising; entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/dining room, white bathroom suite, en-suite to the master bedroom, large rear garden and driveway to the front of the property. No upward chain. EPC – Ordered.

£119,950

OLDBURY
Bhullar Way

A generous modern two bedroom Mews property in SHOW HOME CONDITION built in 2012. The property comprises entrance into living room, large modern dining kitchen with double french doors to rear garden. ground floor WC. Two GOOD SIZED bedrooms , white bathroom suite. Private rear garden with patio area and rear access. Allocated parking space. The property is close to all local amenities and motorway networks. EPC - C.

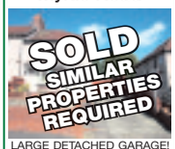
£115,000

RUSSELLS HALL
Maitland Road

A LARGE two bedroom semi detached house situated on the popular Russell's Hall Estate. Having three extensions to the ground floor, therefore offering generous accommodation. Briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, rear extended reception room, extended kitchen, downstairs wet room with shower and WC, utility area, two DOUBLE bedrooms, bathroom, rear garden and driveway to the front. No upward chain. EPC - E

£109,950

DUDLEY
Myrtle Road



LARGE DETACHED GARAGE! Also benefiting from three generous size bedrooms, with a downstairs wet room and upstairs WC, lounge, kitchen/dining room, conservatory, front and rear garden's and off road parking. No upward chain. EPC - D.

£99,950

NETHERTON
Cradley Road

This is an amazing and very well presented family home that is situated along a private cul-de-sac that is shared with only two other houses. The house briefly comprises of hallway, lounge, second reception room, dining room, downstairs wc, utility area, en-suite to master bedroom, landscaped beautiful rear garden and a large driveway to the front. The property is close to all local amenities and has easy access to motorways, excellent local shops and easy public transport links. EPC - Ordered

£250,000

TIPTON
Groveland Road

PRICED TO SELL! Two bedroom apartment briefly comprising; entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, family bathroom and communal areas. EPC - Ordered.

£62,500

MILKING BANK
Yarner Close

Situated on the desirable Milliking Bank Estate & conveniently located in a cul-de-sac location this good size four bedroom detached house has a lot of space to offer. Briefly comprising, entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen with utility room off, downstairs wc, ensuite to master bedroom and family bathroom, rear garden, garage and large driveway to the front. EPC – C

£234,950

GORNAL
Summer Lane

Two bedroom second floor apartment briefly comprising; entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, family bathroom, good size bedrooms, communal gardens.

£55,000

SEDGLEY
Linfield Gardens

A much improved and most attractively presented three bedroom semi detached house occupying a generous corner plot on the popular Northway housing estate. Bere-fitting from a DETACHED GARAGE and LARGE CONSERVATORY. Also comprising lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, re-fitted family bathroom. Outside there is a driveway and additional off road parking in front of the garage. A wide range of amenities are readily available and open greenbelt countryside is only a short distance away. EPC - Ordered.

£155,000

TIPTON
Jays Avenue

This three bedroom end of terrace house is BIGGER THAN IT LOOKS! Benefittting from a large kitchen/dining room and a spacious lounge leading to the conservatory, three bedrooms and a family bathroom to the first floor. A pleasant private rear garden and a driveway to the front. EPC - C.

£99,950

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WOLLASTON
Gerald Road

A beautifully presented modern detached property with double glazing and central heating, and fitted out to a very high standard. Briefly comprising of modern fitted kitchen, lounge/diner, Family bathroom/WC, driveway and garage, Garden to the rear, Unfurnished, Viewing highly essential. No pets, No DSS. EPC - D

£750 PCM & fees

BRIERLEY HILL
Swan Street

A Very Well Presented Three Bedroom Semi- detached house with double glazing, having a Lounge, Fitted Kitchen with Integrated appliances, downstairs WC, Two double bedrooms and a further single bedroom, Modern house Family Bathroom/WC with Shower over bath, Unfurnished, No DSS, No Pets. EPC - C

£595 PCM & fees

DUDLEY
Priory Park

A modern two bedroom 1st floor apartment. Open plan lounge with fully fitted kitchen. Kitchen to include all built in appliances. Main bedroom with en-suite. Unfurnished. Communal lift. Secure entry & allocated parking. No Dss. No pets. Available now to view. Current tenant vacating End of August. EPC - C

£575 PCM & fees

DUDLEY
Burton Road

A three bed mid terraced house with lounge and dining room, kitchen to rear and bathroom/WC downstairs. Three bedrooms upstairs. Double glazing and central heating, garden to rear. No pets, DSS considered with guarantor and deposit. Available to view now. £500 security deposit. EPC - E.

£500PCM & fees

DUDLEY
School Street

A three bed semi detached house having double glazing and central heating, shared driveway to the side. Inside has a lounge, dining kitchen, upstairs has two double bedrooms and a further single bedroom. House bathroom/WC with shower over the bath upstairs. EPC - D

£500 PCM & fees

TIPTON
Anchor Drive

A modern, two bed ground floor apartment - nicely presented, ready to move into! Having a spacious, open plan lounge with dining area, kitchen area off with built-in cooker. Two double bedrooms, house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Double glazing and electric storage heating. Available part or unfurnished, allocated parking space. No DSS, no pets - available for long term. EPC - C

£480 PCM & fees

DUDLEY
Wolverhampton Street

A ground floor commercial unit with shop front, suitable for A1 use:,Retail Sales Light Office,Cold (not Hot) food, Hairdressing, Open plan office with kitchen and WC off, Total office floor area 352 sq ft (32.69 sq meters) EPC - C

£200 PCM & fees

DUDLEY
Priory Street

A modern 1st floor apartment in the centre of Dudley, with allocated parking. lounge, dining/kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, two mezzanine bedrooms, upstairs bathroom. unfurnished, viewing through Trinity Property. Dss considered with guarantor & references. No Pets. Available now EPC - D

£475 PCM & fees

WOLLASTON
Woodfield Avenue

A very well presented three bed semi detached house with views to the rear, having off road parking to the front; side alley with access to a good-sized, fenced rear garden and patio area; internally there is a lounge; large dining kitchen; downstairs bathroom/WC; upstairs WC; two double bedrooms and a further single bedroom. Central heating, no smokers. DSS considered with Guarantor, references and deposit. EPC - D

£595 PCM & fees

RUSSELLS HALL
Osprey Drive

Spacious, one bedroom ground floor apartment. Having electric heating, large lounge, fitted kitchen includes cooker, large double bedroom and bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Storage cupboard in hallway, unfurnished - available for long term rental. No DSS, no pets. EPC - D

£385 PCM & fees

DUDLEY
Malvern Crescent

Traditional three bedroom semi detached house. Lounge, fitted kitchen/ diner includes oven. Bathroom with shower on the ground floor, bedrooms on 1st floor. Driveway & garage. Rear garden. No Dss. No pets EPC - D

£550 PCM & fees

TIPTON
Hursey Drive

Modern two bedroom semi detached house located in cul de sac. Has lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower on 1st floor. Pleasant enclosed rear garden. Driveway to front. Unfurnished. No dss. EPC -E

£525 PCM & fees

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Celebrating 50 years

In 1965 Toyota made a modest entry into the UK car market, its arrival marked by a small four-car stand at that year's motor show. Today, Toyota has not only sold almost three million vehicles in Britain, it builds them here, too.

Although a great deal has changed, there remains a constant theme in Toyota's business that is as true today as it was 50 years ago, as Paul Van der Burgh, Toyota (GB) President and Managing Director, explained: "Toyota entered the UK market with the aim of providing better cars and better service, even if those weren't the words used back them. But ever since, Toyota has stood out for giving the customer something better – better equipment, better reliability and better service."

Pride and Clark was the original UK importer and distributor, a South London family firm that launched its enterprise after John Pride travelled to the Far East to see the developing Japanese car industry for himself. His faith in Toyota was shared by a handful of car retailers who set up the first Toyota showrooms, at first with just a single model line – Corona – to offer their customers.

Business prospered as the range of vehicles grew, not least with introduction of the first Corolla in 1966. The name Toyota (GB) Ltd was adopted in 1967 and by 1980 200,000 cars had been sold, securing its position as a leading player in Britain's car market. Nine years later Toyota announced the UK as the location for a European manufacturing centre. Toyota Manufacturing UK's Burnaston car plant in Derbyshire and Deeside engine factory in North Wales came on stream in 1992 and have benefited from more than £2 billion investment in technology, skills and jobs. They continue to provide valuable opportunities for more than 200 supplier businesses.

TMUK also has the distinction of being the Toyota's first hybrid vehicle manufacturing centre in Europe, building Auris Hybrid models since 2010.

Tony Walker, TMUK deputy managing director, said: "All the work we have done so far has created a solid foundation for the future. The next exciting step for TMUK is to develop our skills ready for the adoption of TNGA – Toyota New Global Architecture. It's not just about new products, it's a new approach to making them. We have plenty of work ahead of us to be ready to adopt the new way of working by the end of the decade, but I strongly believe that, as the last 25 years have shown, we will be ready."

In its 50th year in the UK, Toyota has already launched new Avensis and Auris models – all built at Burnaston.

Later this year it will also begin marketing the first of its Mirai hydrogen fuel cell vehicles here, opening a new chapter in zero emissions driving with technology the drivers of those first Corona saloons could never have imagined.

While Toyota's focus is on the future and the development of ever-better cars, it honours the achievements of some its influential models of the past in a heritage fleet, maintained by Toyota (GB). The classic line-up includes an original Corona saloon, the famous Corolla AE86 that helped inspire today's GT86 coupe, a first-generation RAV4 and one of the earliest British-built models, a 1992-vintage Carina E.

Toyota is a big player in British car manufacturing. All the Avensis models and all the Auris hatchbacks and wagons are made at the Burnaston plant in Derbyshire.

A detailed search for the oldest UK-registered Toyota has come up with two original Corona saloons, still on the road and nearing 50 years old.

We've raced and rallied with great success, including BTCC championships with both Corolla and Carina.

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†Model shown is an MG3 3Style in White On The Tiles with no optional extras at £9,999 OTR. ††On the road price of £8,399 applies to the MG3 3Time with no optional extras. On the road (OTR) prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months' Road Fund Licence. Costs exclude optional metallic paint, accessories and graphics packages. ^Flexible Warranty - A 3yr/ 60,000 mile warranty is standard on all new MG3 models. Flexible Warranty options are available only at time of vehicle purchase at an additional cost. Packages include the following options: 4yrs or 60,000 miles, 4yrs or 80,000 miles, 4yrs or 100,000 miles, 5yrs or 60,000 miles, 5yrs or 80,000 miles, 5yrs or 100,000 miles. Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results. Please see MG.CO.UK or ask your local dealer.

Fuel Consumption MPG (l/100km) for MG3 range: Urban 37.7 (7.5), Extra Urban 57.6 (4.9), Combined 48.7 (5.8), CO_2 Emissions 136 g/km.

MGDA4P1113

Luxury and economy mixed well

By Ian Donaldson

Goodness knows how long it might take to decide which tempting extras to add to your new Range Rover. Several pleasant hours, at least.

That's a joy to come after you've plumped for the basic vehicle itself, of course. And here you're also faced with an almost bewildering set of choices.

The Range Rover you read about here mixes luxury and economy in a way that might let an owner feel good about (modestly) saving the planet while the rear seat passengers feel as though they're flying first class.

For under the bonnet beats a diesel engine, while beneath the floor sits a well protected battery that will actually power this big, heavy car a little way all on its own and helps out generally when it can elsewhere.

This economy thinking might be more usual in cars costing a very great deal less than a hybrid Range Rover but it does let it post some impressively 'green' figures for something so chunky, even if they're tinged with the optimism of all official consumption tables.

The added luxury (on an already pretty swish car, of course) comes from stretching front and rear wheels 20cms further apart, all to the benefit of rear seat legroom – now accessed via rear doors so wide they'll present a danger to passing traffic if not opened cautiously.

Apart from making you feel like as film star stepping on to the red carpet at Cannes, they give so much lounging room you might never want to get out. Recline the seatback and you'll probably be snoozing before the car slips into top gear.

That stretch puts £7,700 on the price of the Range Rover and added to the hybrid option, pushes the car well over £100,000. That is still a good deal less expensive than, say, a Bentley saloon which feels no more luxurious and wouldn't take you to dinner via the nearest goat track, should you so desire.

In the context of figures like this it seems daft to consider the financial benefits of saving a little fuel and personal taxation by taking the hybrid option, which adds thousands to the bottom line and must surely make it a dearer proposition than going for a cheaper purely diesel model.

But that is not to think like a potential owner. At this level an owner can spend what is needed to produce a warm glow every time the engine starts – and if that includes feeling good about reduced emissions, so much the better.

The new Range Rover might be built entirely of aluminium but it's a weighty beast in long wheelbase, battery added form. It tips the scales at more than 2,500 kilos, or comfortably more than two Fiestas.

The 33mpg recorded on a short and undemanding test drive won't set any records but looks respectable with all that metal to pull around.

Progress is serene with the diesel engine helping, or not. Indeed, it is so refined that the short sections on battery only felt no different; a tribute to the way the Range Rover engineers have integrated the two power systems.

But you won't be bothering with the practical details after a glance at the Range Rover on-line brochure (set aside an hour or two on Sunday morning), where you will be seduced into spending still more.

Difficult to turn down an extra large windscreen washer bottle for £30 but do steer clear of putting your name on illuminated tread plates to be admired every time you open a front door. That's £720 well saved.

TESTED

Range Rover 3.0 SDV6 HEV Autobiography LWB

Engine: 335bhp petrol and electric motor
Warranty: Three years, unlimited miles
Economy: The Range Rover can do 44.1 mpg
Insurance: 49
Price: £110,150

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2013/63	VAUXHALL INSIGNIAI SAL 2.0CDTi SRi NAV Silver, 26,700 miles		£11495
2009/09	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 SRI TURBO XP 3door, Red, 60,620 miles		£6995
2005/05	KIA SPORTAGE 2.0 XE CRDI 5 door, Blue, 48,498 miles		£5995
2013/63	VAUXHALL ADAM HATCH 1.2 70ps SLAM 3 door, Yellow, 7,361 miles		£9995
2008/08	MINI COOPER 1.6 S CLUBMAN Red, 49,800 miles		£6995
2006/56	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 SXI SPORTS HATCH Black, 46,100 miles		£4450
2011/61	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 5DR 1.7CDTI EXCITE ECOFLEX Diesel Power Red 33,826 miles		£8495
2013/13	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.6 VXR 3Dr White 8,876 miles		£12995
2009/59	VAUXHALL MERIVA LIFE EASY TRONIC 1.6 Blue 34,281 miles		£3795
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2012/12	VAUXHALL CORSA ACTIVE 1.2 A/C 5 Door red 13,702 miles		£7495
2012/12	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 SXI AC CDTi 5 door,White, 59,541 miles		£7495
2012/12	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 ACTIVE, 3 door, Red, 39,331 miles		£5650
2010/59	VAUXHALL ASTRA 2.0 VXR COUPE Red, 25,600 miles		£9995
2014/64	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 LIMITED EDITION 3 door, Red, Only 1,600 miles		£9995
2013/13	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 ENERGY AC 3 door,White, only 9,400 miles		£7495
2011/61	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 SE 5 door, Silver, 23,500 miles		£6495
2010/60	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA EXCLUSIV NAV 2.0 5 door, Blue, 63,910 miles		£7495
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2011/61	VAUXHALL COMBO 1.7 CDTi VAN White, 18241 miles		£5695+VAT
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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, August 13, 2015

Top tips for used buyers

Used car demand has tailed off slightly due to the holiday period while the SUV market continues to go from strength to strength.One of the current best buys is the Porsche Boxster.

"The Porsche Boxster represents great value as a used car and many envious onlookers will think the buyer has spent a bucket load more cash than they actually have," said Gavin Amos, head of valuation services at My Car Check.

My Car Check, a leading consumer vehicle data provider, has saved millions of people from making an expensive used car mistake.

In its monthly bulletin its used car experts reveal significant trends in the UK market and choose a 'car of the month'.

"Even at around ten years old, the ageing second generation 987 variants still look fresh today," said Amos. Boxster offers an exhilarating drive no matter which engine you choose and the chassis is nothing short of superb.

"When it comes to negotiating, remember, as well as revealing a car's history, My Car Check also provides vehicle valuations – a great tool for haggling with dealers or private sellers."

As to market trends, Amos said: "July brings little change to the used car market. Although demand has tailed off slightly due to the holiday period, used values remain relatively stable.

"Only older vehicles, in particular those with higher than average mileage, have seen reductions this month, mostly just one to two per cent.

"With the downsizing trend continuing, Corsa, Fiesta and the Korean competition are thriving. The SUV market continues to go from strength to strength and every manufacturer wants a piece of the action. Nearly all are either already selling, or in the process of unveiling, new variants.

"Renault are entering the fold with new Kadjar, Suzuki have the new Vitara and Seat are about to launch a new A-SUV model. These will create an even more congested sector with consumers spoilt for choice. During the holiday season we historically experience a plateau in enquiry levels, allowing dealers to focus on new registration orders for delivery in September," said Amos.

Check

My Car Check's parent company, CDL Vehicle Information Services, performs over a million look-ups a day for companies including AutoExpress, CompareTheMarket, Confused.com, Go-Compare, Moneysupermarket, Swiftcover, Tesco Compare and WhatCar?

It uses up-to-the-minute data from the police, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Association of British Insurers (ABI) and all major finance houses, including Lloyds TSB and Santander.

To help UK consumers make the right choice, My Car Check can confirm in seconds whether your potential pride and joy has ever been scrapped, stolen or written-off, has any money owing

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3 Home & Services

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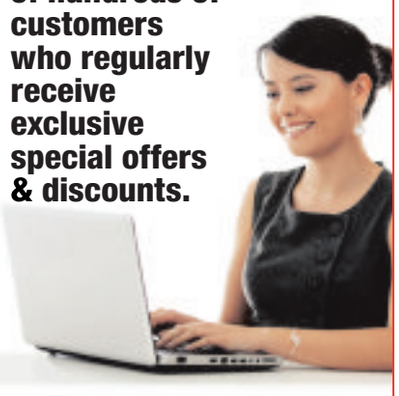

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

PAUL HODGETTS (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 7 Woodside Road Dudley West Midlands DY2 0UA, who died on 06/12/2014, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before two months and one day from the date of this publication, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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Wychbury Court Two Woods Lane Brierley Hill West Midlands DY5 1TA
T446789

INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
IN BANKRUPTCY
DUDLEY COUNTY COURT
NO 514 of 2007 **RE: GARY WILLIAM LEESON**
Who at the date of the bankruptcy order, 13 December 2007, resided at 1 Unitt Drive, Cradley Heath, West Midlands, B64 6DB.
D.O.B: 25 October 1962
NOTE: the above-named was discharged from the proceedings and may no longer have a connection with the address listed.
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Creditors who have not yet proved their debts must do so by *9th September 2015* otherwise they will be excluded from the dividend. The required proof of debt form is available on the Insolvency Service website (www.bis.gov.uk/insolvency, select "Forms" and then form 6.37). Alternatively, you can contact my office at Second Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester, M1 3BN or telephone 0161 234 8500 to supply a form.
Mr A Oliver, Official Receiver and trustee

ROBERT WILLIAM MILNER (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 75 Wrens Hill Road Dudley West Midlands DY1 4EB, who died on 01/06/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 23/10/2015, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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6 Property

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personal

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JO 55, curvy redhead, loves eating out, theatre, travel, looking for middle-aged prince charming to sweep me off my feet. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4464905**

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Men seeking women

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GUY 57, 5'11 looking for no strings fun with same-minded slim lady. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4495128**

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MALE seeking female, 45 plus, status unimportant, discretion assured for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418481**

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VERY fit 5'8 sporty attractive, pro Black male seeks lady 35-58, any nationality for tactile LTR. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4844360**

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JOHN 26, GSOH, likes the outdoors, wine and good food, medium athletic build, WLTM older woman for fun and friendship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4488256**

LONELY male, 57, seeks Chinese/Jamaican/Romanian male/female for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418245**

WIDOWER 70's, lonely, educated, well travelled, reliable, tactile, seeks fun, N/S lady for friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416481**

VICTOR, retired, 5ft 8ins, professional, seeks N/S lady for fun, friendship and happy times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 309157**

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Heathens title hopes are still very much alive

CRADLEY skipper Max Clegg insists the club's title hopes are still alive after their stunning win over runaway leaders Birmingham.

The Heathens are now entering a run of away meetings, starting at Stoke on Saturday, as they aim to close the gap on their Perry Barr track sharers and turn up the pressure.

Said Clegg: "I'm just so pleased we were able to get the win to keep our chances of the title alive, because if we'd have lost we know that would have been it.

"It's still going to be very difficult, and we can't really afford any slip-ups, but if we can approach every meeting like that Birmingham meeting then we should keep on winning.

"We've got our hardest meeting out of the way and won it, so we are definitely capable of winning our remaining meetings.

"We've got three away meetings coming up which won't be easy, but I think if we are at our best we can win them all which would move us right up there with Birmingham.

"All we can do now is focus on our own meetings, and if we can keep winning over the rest of the season that's bound to put some pressure on Birmingham.

"We have to keep believing we can go all the way.We've been aiming from the start of the year to defend our title."

Heathens are without the injured Nathan Greaves on Saturday along with Matt Williamson who is on Premier League duty for Workington.

Their next home meeting at Perry Barr is on Wednesday August 26 against King's Lynn.

Dream goal shows that Ben is back

Ben Billingham, right, celebrates with Ryan Rowe

BEN Billingham enjoyed a dream return from injury after grabbing the only goal as Stourbridge overcame Lye in a Black Country derby.

The midfielder, who has been sidelined for the past 10 months with a freak ankle injury, came off the bench to devastating affect in the pre-season friendly.

Billingham entered the fray as a second half substitute and four minutes later picked up the ball on the edge of the box.

He then tricked his way past two defenders before curling an unstoppable strike into the top corner from 25-yards.

The 26-year-old, a former Lye player, was making his first appearance in Stourbridge colours since picking up his ankle injury.

He played in the friendly despite recently securing a loan move to Cradley Town.

"Some people have said to me it was a goal that was meant to be," the self-employed construction worker said. "It's been a difficult 10 months. The injury stopped me from playing football and working for a spell and it's been a long old road to get back.

"But I'm a former Lye player and to come on and score that goal – one of the best I have ever scored – was the perfect return.

"It's what everyone dreams about playing football and scoring against their old team. It's great to be back."

Game abandoned because of injuries

Halesowen Town 1 Tividale 1

HALESOWEN'S final pre-season friendly was abandoned nine minutes early with the scores level at 1-1.

The game was stopped after Tividale striker Joel Ayettey and Halesowen goalkeeper Dan Platt suffered serious injuries.

Referee Terry Holbrook took the decision to halt the game after Platt raced out of goal to meet a long ball and clashed heads with former Causeway United striker Ayettey, resulting in the home goalkeeper losing three teeth and Ayettey suffering a head cut and concussion.

Halesowen made several changes from their midweek defeat and included Kyle Morrison from Alvechurch in defence.

As play commenced, Craig Milligan's fourth minute free-kick earned a corner for Tividale before Tom Turner made a good save to turn Dean Waldron's 10th minute snapshot away for a Yeltz corner.

Platt collected Demetri Brown's header two minutes later in even exchanges, officiated in Holbrook's usual competent, no-nonsense style.

Blazed

There were few clear chances midway in the first half in the heat of the Grove although Isaac Cooper hit high after 22 minutes and Connor Collins then blazed high and wide from the right after Darius Darkin played the ball out .

The visitors gained the upper hand late in the first half and Platt was forced to juggle a tricky shot from the right by Ashley Jackson after 35 minutes.

Demetri Brown then robbed the home defence in the 42nd minute but Chris Sterling ballooned the ball over the bar.

The Dale took a deserved lead just a minute before half-time when Demetri Brown beat the home defence down the right and cut the ball back for Jahmel Taylor to control and slam home from 12 yards.

The Yeltz were much livelier after the interval and equalised in the 48th minute when Collins converted a close-range header from Cooper's delightful left wing cross.

Home substitute Elikem Amenku then headed a cross from substitute Ashley Parsons-Smith at goalkeeper Turner before the game was brought to its early conclusion.

Lukas is a world champ at eight

Martial artist Lukas Letts shows off one of his world championship medals

MARTIAL artist Lukas Letts has added a new honour to his already vast collection when he was crowned a world champion.

The eight-year-old from Cradley stormed to a gold medal in the kata event of the Go-Kan-Ryu world championships in Liverpool.

He also brought home bronze in the kumite (sparring) event.

Lukas suffers from chronic asthma but that doesn't stop him training at three different clubs each week and his mum, Laura Cooper, insists it helps him to deal with the condition.

She said: "We're totally over the moon that he won his medals and we can't believe it.

"We have all said if he didn't do his karate his asthma would be a lot worse."

The talented martial artist is also twice UK champion and regional champion. Lukas won the medals in the third kyu and above combined category for eight to nine year olds, in the GKR Tournament where more than 1,500 competed .

The youngster is a second grade brown belt. Lukas trains in the karate style of Bukan-Ryu and attends the club's Colin Lane Community Centre in Cradley, Old Hill Church and Fitness First, Lye.

Team Dudley enjoy shut out for derby

Team Dudley 4 Wrens Nest 0

Team Dudley gave a fine performance to take a 4-0 home derby victory over Wrens Nest in West Midlands Division One.

They struck early when Lee Clark's fifth-minute corner was headed in off the bar by Jordan Langford-Hill.

Nest responded with a header from a corner of their own, but Lee Salt's effort found the hands of keeper Liam Jones.

Dudley's Ryan Spittle hit a volley over the bar before firing a shot across keeper Aaron Morris only to see it thump against the post.

But on the half-hour-mark, the home team scored when a long throw by Nathan Jones was met by the head of James Hawthorne.

An own goal from Sean Wyne and a fine team move completed by Reece Bancroft's composed lob rounded off the scoring.

Just before the half hour Spittle had another chance, chasing down defender Sean Wyne he won the ball and surged to goal, a shot across Morris was perfect but whacked the post and found another Orange shirt to aid the clearance.

Just a minute later, on the half hour, TD would have their lead doubled, a long throw from Nathan Jones would create havoc in the box and a header from captain James Hawthorne would be enough to give Dudley a double advantage in their local derby.

The second half began with Team Dudley on the ropes a little, just two minutes in and Liam Jones misjudged a high bal.

A third goal did arrive though, 64 minutes into it. The ball hit Sean Wyne and went past Morris.

Beacon footie league looking a lot healthier

A TOTAL of 22 teams will contest the honours in the 2015/16 Beacon Sunday Football League.

Having finished the last campaign with only five teams in the premier section, following withdrawals, the league has attracted several new clubs.

As a result the Premier section is back to 10 teams, while the remaining 12 will contest the league action in Division One. The new league campaign kicks off on Sunday, September 6. Once again the member teams will also compete in two separate league cup competitions.

In the Premier there will be two groups of five teams playing each other, with the top two in each section going through to the semi-finals.

In the Division One League Cup there will be four groups of three.

Swimmers competing in new contest

FIVE swimmers from Halesowen Swimming Club competed in the ASA National Summer Championships at Ponds Forge International Pool Sheffield.

New for 2015, this competition was for top-ranked English swimmers who did not qualify in the earlier British Championships in a particular event.

With swimmers consistently outperforming their personal best times, Josh Bradley made the Open 50m butterfly and backstroke finals.

Jack Simpson in the 14-year-olds 100m freestyle and Kate Morrice the 12/13years 50m freestyle finals.

But the best placed finish of the week was by James Cuthbert who won the silver medal in the 14-year-olds 100m butterfly final.

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Sport

Match abandoned due to injuries
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Lye five as Brocton are shut down

Brocton 0 Lye 5

TWO goals apiece for Tom Overfield and James Spray made it a disheartening day for Brocton in the Midland Football League Premier.

BROCTON started well enough with some decent passing.

It was a long pass that led to Lye Town's opener when Simon Williams ignored plaintive calls for offside and kept his composure to beat a stranded Calum Barrett.

James Spray held the ball well for the visitors all game and his strength on the ball let in the hard-working Tom Overfield, but this time nothing came of the move.

Then Brocton put together a few promising moves of their own. A flick on from Gary Fife let Josh Wilson in on the right and a good cross found Fife's head for a downward effort wide of the post.

A moment's hesitation by Callum Rudd in defence left him stranded,and with acres of time and space the cross was measured and Overfield made no mistake.

Sam Tye put in a ball across field from right to left and although Spray rode his luck a little when the ball arrived, he worked his way into the box and never looked like missing.

It was a poor pass into the centre of Lye's defence that led to Brocton conceding a fourth.

A single long ball from the back had the defence static and looking at each other as Overfield nipped through and had time to commit Barrett before taking the ball round him and striking home.

Simon Williams fed Spray for Lye's fifth.

Nightmare run in touring contest for Honda team mates

STOURBRIDGE driver Matt Neal and his Honda Yuasa team suffered a nightmare British Touring Car Championship round at Snetterton.

Neal dropped from third to fourth in the overall standings and team-mate Gordon Shedden, the previous championship leader, is now third.

Neal took a top-six placing in the opening race, but both he and Shedden had to retire from the second one with damage.

Another retirement for Shedden in race three completed a chastening day for the Honda outfit.

MG Triple Eight's Jack Goff earned his first ever BTCC victory after producing a dominant performance in the final encounter.

Racing on the soft tyre, Goff fended off Jason Plato's VW to take the win.

Plato now tops the overall standings from team-mate Colin Turkington, with the Honda pair just behind them.

Fifth place was held by Adam Morgan's WIX Racing Mercedes in the opening moments but double race-winner Colin Turkington was soon ahead on lap two. Almost simultaneously Plato produced arguably the move of the day as he went into the Complex.

Cradley triumph in thrilling derby

Ellis Perks leads Sam Chapman. Pic: John Hipkiss

Speedway

CRADLEY kept their National League title ambitions alive as they edged a nail-biting 46-44 triumph over co-tenants Birmingham in a dramatic encounter at Perry Barr.

The depleted Heathens showed plenty of grit and determination to overcome the absence of Matt Williamson due to injury to claim local bragging rights in a tense last-heat decider.

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They appeared set for a long night when skipper Max Clegg suffered mechanical gremlins on the opening lap of heat one – but he bounced back in style to notch 11+1 points as himself and the in-form Ellis Perks spearheaded a strong team performance.

After reserve duo Arron Mogridge and Tyler Govier had combined to give the Heathens an early lead in heat two, Perks pulled off a remarkable ride to force his way past Zach Wajtknecht before picking off Sam Chapman for victory in heat three.

Birmingham No.1 Ellis rounded off a faultless 15 point maximum but Clegg and Perks held their nerve to shut out Perry.

DAVE HANDS WOLVES WIN

Blackburn Rovers 1 Wolves 2

WOLVES were effective, if not explosive, in what could be classed as a fortunate victory at league rivals Blackburn.

Fortunate in that Blackburn created more chances and should have been 2-0 up by the time Wolves edged in front with their first shot in anger of the new season.

And fortunate in that their winning goal came via David Edwards' hand.

His sheepish 'celebration' said it all, but referee Mark Haywood didn't spot it and Wolves got away with it.

Blackburn also hit the post twice, in the opening and dying minutes.

But Wolves too had moments of bad luck, with James Henry rattling the bar from 20 yards and substitute Sheyi Ojo unfortunate not to win a penalty as Wolves broke clear from Blackburn's relentless late pressure.

Earned

To say fortune swung this match, though, would do Wolves a disservice, for they earned their victory.

Yes, there were a few harum-scarum moments, but Wolves remained calm and composed in possession throughout the second half in what was the professional approach that Jackett desired.

And their resolute defending was to be admired.

Pleasingly for those of a gold and black persuasion, the boss was not getting carried away in the slightest.

Delighted with victory and of his team spirit, of course, but Jackett also talked of improvements needed and criticised his team for a sluggish start.

That start – the one in which Wolves didn't have a shot for 29 minutes and were rugged at the back, making several individual errors – was a bad habit in pre-season and one they will want to stamp out sharpish.

Better teams – and, let's be honest, Blackburn were pretty ordinary – may punish Wolves.

And in midfield, despite Edwards' match-winning contribution, they were unbalanced.

Busy weekend for DK runners

Members of Dudley Kingswinford Running Club who enjoyed a busy weekend of races

AFTER a quiet weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club last week it was back to business as usual this week.

The first was at Baggeridge Country Park for the Action Heart organised Baggeridge 5k.

DK won the prize for the club with the most entries from the local heavyweights of Wolverhampton & Bilston and Tipton Harriers.

Dave Norman led the hoops home in 21st place in 21.46, Simon Blizzard was 25th in 22.05, Pete Hood claimed the 1st MV50 prize in 29th place with 22.58, Helen Tromans also won her age group in 39th place in 24.17, John Andrews was 59th in 26.12 just beating Dave Garbutt a place behind in 26.20.

Winner

John Glover led home a group in 100th place in 30.25 from Tracey Jones in 101st in 30.28, Sally McConville, also an age group winner, was 104th in 30.35 and Max Jones was 106th in 30.42. Gina Collins was 113th in 31.22 and Angela Jones was 127th in 33.14.

Twenty fours later it was on to The Dell Stadium where the club had arranged mile races in association with Sweatshop in Brierley Hill and Action Heart. There were eight races where each runner was seeded to ensure they were running against other athletes of a similar standard, and there were plenty of good performances on what proved to be a competitive evening.

The stand out performance came from Ben Foster who took the Senior Male prize winning his heat in a lightning fast 4.42 from Rob Meredith in 5.0 and Matt Biggs in 5.06.

Rebecca Warren claimed the Senior Female prize in an unchallenged 6.34, the Male Vet 40-44 prize was claimed by Barren Beattie in 5.46 with the Female version going to Charlotte Tonks in 7.62 and the Male Vets 45+ prize went to Darran Bishop in 5.18 with Louise Sanders with 7.08 taking the female prize.

It was then on to Mary Steven's Park in Stourbridge on Saturday evening for the Stourbridge Stumble, a tough 10k.

Matt Biggs was first hoop home in 7th place in 38.33, James Wright produced a blistering finish to take 13th place in 39.39, Dave Hickman finished in 49.49 in 73rd place, John Andrews was 99th in 53.52 and Lisa Kendrick finished in 48.30 to take 126th place.

Hillman hits his hat-trick for shock win

Wolverhampton Casuals 2 Dudley Sports 3

A Stuart Hillman hat-trick earned Dudley Sports a shock 3-2 West Midlands League Premier Division when they grabbed an opening-day win at Wolverhampton Casuals.

The scoring was opened when Hillman struck in the second minute after he had robbed the ball from Casuals' Ian Boswell and fired the ball beyond the reach of the outstretched Liam Stanton from 25 yards.

Sports' Aaron Gordon was the first player to be shown a yellow card in the match for kicking the ball away after the referee had blown his whistle for a free-kick.

Casuals managed to dominate the play and deservedly brought the score level when Jon Huckfield headed home a Joe Davies corner.

But Sports regained the lead just before half-time when and again it was Hillman who rifled a fierce shot past Stanton from wide on the left to go into the break on top.

However, Casuals were soon back on level terms with just two minutes of play gone in the second half.

This time is was Jack Corns who was the man on target with his looping 35-yard shot leaving Sports keeper Aaron Collins very little chance of keeping the ball out of the net.

Casuals' Jay Holdcroft had his effort on goal ruled out for a foul before Hillman headed home an 80th-minute winner and sealed his hat-trick to give TD the victory.

New boy Rudy is raring to go again

NEW boy Rudy Gestede admits he can't wait to get his first taste of the Villa Park atmosphere against Manchester United on Friday.

The 26-year-old made an instant impact when he came off the bench to grab the winner in the claret and blues season opener at Bournemouth.

His goal sparked wild celebrations on the terraces and now the Benin-born hotshot is relishing the prospect of walking out in front of the Villa Park faithful for the first time.

"It was an amazing feeling to celebrate with the fans," he said.

"I can't wait for Friday now. I am looking forward to it," he said.

★★★

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